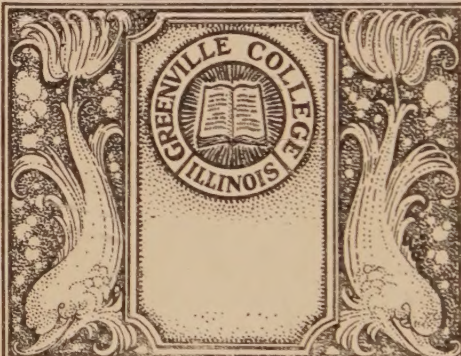


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FISHERS OF MEN ;

OR,

PRACTICAL HINTS TO THOSE WHO
WOULD WIN SOULS.

BY REV. B. T. ROBERTS, A.M.

"He that winneth souls is wise."—PROV. XI, 30.

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PREFACE.

Christ, when on earth, called men of different degrees of talent and of mental culture, and from various conditions of life, to preach His Gospel. He does so still. Many neglect the call.

Some defer it indefinitely—others until they can attain to a certain standard of literary qualifications. This book is designed to encourage all whom God calls, to enter at once upon the work of saving souls. It is hoped that it may be of practical service to young and inexperienced ministers of the Gospel. They will find in every chapter, hints and suggestions which, if heeded, may help them in their great work.

In this country, among all denominations, the people have more or less influence in determining who shall be their preachers. It is important that they should entertain correct, Scriptural ideas of what they have a right to expect of those whom they take as

their spiritual guides. In these pages they may be assisted in coming to a just decision in this important matter.

In the work of soul saving, every follower of Christ should bear a part. He has duties to do which he cannot delegate to any ; responsibilities to meet which he cannot transfer to other shoulders. In the pages which follow, the earnest endeavor is made to stir up Christians to a more lively appreciation of their duties, and to lay before them strong incentives to their performance.

The effort has been to take no position that is not sustained by a fair interpretation of the word of God. To this word we bow with the most cordial submission. If our work may be thought by some to be radical, we beg them to bear in mind that the Bible is a radical book.

✓ This life is so short that we cannot afford to lose much time in experiments in the great work of saving men. Just as far as possible, we should profit by the experience of others. Under similar conditions, like causes produce like results. Where others have failed, we should learn a lesson from

their failures, and carefully avoid the causes which led to their disappointment and defeat. We should turn the success of those who win, to our own advantage, by adopting, as far as circumstances permit, the methods by which they overcame. Hence, in these pages we frequently refer to those who, by their godly living and by the judicious employment of their time and means, left the world better for their labors. "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

The most of the matter contained in this volume has been written expressly for it. But when, in treating upon our subject, we have found what we wished to say already written, in articles which, from time to time, we have prepared for *The Earnest Christian*, we have transferred it, with suitable alterations, to these pages.

We have written from a deep conviction of duty, and with an abiding sense of the presence and help of God.

We have endeavored to write with the utmost plainness, so that none need be at a

loss to comprehend our meaning. We speak in earnest, and we wish to be understood.

If what we have written shall add to the usefulness of those self-denying men who are laboring for the good of others, and thus be indirectly the means of bringing souls to Heaven, our object will have been accomplished, and God shall have the glory.

B. T. ROBERTS.

Rochester, N. Y., August 20th, 1878.

FISHERS OF MEN.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS SUCCESS ?

"Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fishes."
—John **xxi**, 11.

When may a preacher of the Gospel be said to succeed in his calling ? We say of a doctor that he succeeds when he cures his patient ; of a lawyer, when he wins his case ; of a soldier, when he de- x
feats his enemy. Success in any enterprise is the prosperous accomplishment of the object of the undertaking.

The minister of Jesus Christ is a man called of Christ to do for Him a certain, definite work. What is this work ? We have an answer in the words of inspiration : "And He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers : for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."—Eph. iv, 11-13.

These are comprehensive words. They are full of meaning. They teach that the object of the ministry is to prepare men and women for Heaven—for an eternal abode with the God of purity and love. This is to be done by converting sinners to God, and then inducing them to go on in faith, and love, and knowledge, and holiness, to the end of their lives. In becoming a “perfect man, through faith, and through the knowledge of the Son of God,” is implied deliverance from every sinful disposition and affection of the soul, and from every unnatural or inordinate appetite of the body. He in whom this work is done by the power of the Spirit of God, thus becomes a saint. A great work of grace has been wrought in him; but it is not completed. The genius of the sculptor is seen in the finishing touches which he gives to the marble likeness of the human form. (So the ability and fidelity of the minister of the Gospel are manifested in the ripeness of Christian experience and character to which those attain who put themselves under his guidance.) Unless the farmer give to his grain the care necessary to bring it to the harvest, his previous labor is lost. The Apostle writes to some who had been converted through his instrumentality, but who had turned from spiritual to ceremonial religion, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.”—Gal. iv, 11. It was not enough that they belonged to the church, in a day when it was the greatest reproach to be a Christian. It was not enough that they observed all the ceremonies and fasts and feasts of

the church: all was of no avail so long as they were wanting in the fruits of the Spirit.

The success of a minister of Jesus Christ does not consist, then, in drawing a large congregation. An infidel having the gift of eloquence may do that. Nor does his success in building church edifices, and paying church debts, and obtaining large contributions for benevolent purposes, meet the demands in the case. A man of good address and good business ability, whom God has never called to the work of the ministry, may do all these. All these may be important; but they are not the peculiar work of one called of God to labor for the salvation of souls.

x He is a successful minister who is successful in saving souls. If he fails in this—no matter in what else he may succeed—he fails in the one important thing. He stands before God in the same light that the General, who drills, and feeds, and manœuvres his men, but who never wins a battle, stands before the people. He fails in that which is essential. Many fail utterly who are counted successful. They obtain a good name among their adherents and they rest in that. One may have a reputation for learning and eloquence and piety. Another may be esteemed for his courage and straitness in declaring the unpopular truths of the Gospel, and in marking out clearly the narrowness of the way to Heaven, and in enforcing discipline upon his members. Another may attract attention by his fervor and zeal. But if one fails in edifying the body of Christ—that is in building

up the church by the conversion of sinners and the perfecting of the saints—his ministry is a lamentable failure. Whatever he thinks—whatever men say, God writes him down a failure. His time is wasted ; his labor is lost ; his energies are squandered ; he misses the main thing. There can be no doubt but that many who think they succeed as ministers, will themselves come short of Heaven. They deceive themselves to their eternal undoing. This is what our Lord says : “ Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you : depart from me ye that work iniquity.”—Mat. vii, 22, 23.

But this subject should have a wider application. What is the great object of life with every believer in Christ ? Is it to gain wealth or renown ? No, indeed. These, in comparison with eternal interests, are the merest trifles. It is not to ministers only, but to every believer, that Christ says : “ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”—Mat. vi, 19, 20. Here is a plain prohibition, and a plain command. Can it be supposed that he obeys the command who devotes his whole life to disobeying the prohibition ? The two are in contrast. The Saviour plainly says

that he who does the one cannot do the other. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."—Mat. vi, 24. He, then, who devotes his life to money-getting, even though he succeeds in this, fails in the great object of life. In losing his soul, he loses all.

✓ The success of man, then, is] to be estimated—not in the hoarded millions of glittering gold, of no value whatever in that permanent home in which he spends his eternity—not in the miles of railroads, or in the farms, or bonds, or stocks which he calls his own—not in the armies which he has conquered, or the cities which he has taken—not in the estimate which the world makes of his greatness, or the praises which they lavish upon his name; but in living a life of devotion to God; in being instrumental, directly or indirectly, in turning many to righteousness, who shall live as imperishable memorials of his fidelity and wisdom when earthly monuments shall have crumbled into dust, and when the earth itself and all its works shall have been consumed.

CHAPTER II.

SUCCESS A DUTY.

"And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many."—Ezek. xlvii, 10.

In the undertakings of this life, men are estimated by their success. Washington triumphed in a rebellion against constituted authority; and he is styled a patriot. Davis and Lee failed; and they are called rebels. A sudden rain, raising the river, and breaking off his communications, leads to the defeat of a general, and to his dismissal as incompetent; while the unexpected arrival of reinforcements at the critical time, renders another victorious, and crowns him as the hero of the world. An unexpected foreign war makes one speculator wealthy—another a pauper. The one goes to the poor-house—the other is elected mayor of the city. Thus do men honor success, even when obtained without merit.

But in the work of the Lord, success never comes by chance. No fortunate circumstances ever secure a crown of life for the undeserving. The child of the greatest saint does not, by natural birth, succeed to a Heavenly inheritance. It is to "them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality,"

that God shall "render eternal life."—Rom. ii, 7. They who wear a crown in Heaven resplendent with jewels, obtained it by well-directed, persistent efforts. He who wins souls, labors for souls.

In worldly affairs, the best efforts sometimes fail. Said an accurate observer, of large experience: "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, not yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."—Ecc. ix, 11. Nothing is plainer to be seen than that, in temporal matters, success is not proportioned to merit. It was a knowledge of this that made the ancient Greeks and Romans worship Fortune as a goddess. Splendid temples were erected in her honor, and she was represented with wealth in her arms. (But he who works for God never loses the fruit of his labors.) Failure is clear beyond the range of possibility. In the service of men, he may be deprived of the rewards of his toil. An insignificant insect, an untimely frost, may disappoint the expectations of the most sagacious, industrious farmer; but to him who properly works in the vineyard of Christ, the harvest is sure. Nothing can disappoint him. God has given him the strongest assurances of success: "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."—1 Cor. xv, 58.

He who fails in securing the object of any earthly pursuit may not be at all to blame. But if the minister of Jesus Christ fails as a minister, it is entirely his fault. His success is guaranteed by the most unequivocal promises. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."—Mat. iv, 19.

Christ does not mean that this was to be their unfruitful calling. It is a promise of success. But to put it beyond a doubt, he says: "Fear not; henceforth thou shalt catch men."—Luke v, 10. He tells his disciples that his doctrines would be unpopular—that in aiming a mortal blow at human selfishness, they would provoke the deepest opposition; yet, in the face of all, there should be such a divine fascination attending the faithful preaching of the cross, that men should, in the midst of their hostility, be drawn to Christ—should be alarmed and yet should be caught. The psalmist says: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."—Ps. cxxvi, 6. This, as every one must see, relates to efforts put forth for the salvation of souls. He says that of the success of one who properly labors, there is no doubt. He shall come from the great harvest field—not with discouragement, but with rejoicing—not having trampled down the grain, but bringing his sheaves with him. In this passage, as in the others which we have quoted, the conditions of success are found alone in the person who labors. No allusion whatever is made to favorable circumstances. It is not required that

there be no difficulties to be encountered, no prejudices to be met, no obstacles to be overcome. No matter how sterile the soil, or unfavorable the season, he shall bring in the sheaves of ripened grain. The opposition to the truth may be ever so great, the power of sin ever so strong—notwithstanding all, he shall see a gracious revival of the work of God.

*The conditions of success are within the reach of every minister of the Gospel. It is not required that he be a man of great talent or learning. When the Saviour says, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men," the condition is such that every one who hears the call can meet. (All it requires is the unflinching purpose, the unwavering faith, the abandonment of all for Christ.) Many may be incapable of preaching what are called great sermons; but every one can, "go forth and weep, bearing precious seed."

It is the duty then of every minister of the Gospel to succeed in saving souls. If he does not, he is either out of place, or he does not fill his place. The fault is his. He must not lay his failure to do good to the perverse state of things. If every body was right, there would be no need of ministers. There is no preaching in Heaven. It is because men are wicked that they need the Gospel.

Says President Finney: "Want of success in a minister (other things being equal) proves, (1) either that he was never called to preach, and has taken it up out of his own head; or (2) that he

was badly educated, and was never taught the very things he needs most to know; or (3) if he was called to do his duty, he is too indolent or too wicked to do it."

The Rev. A. B. Earle, a successful evangelist of the Baptist Church, says: "For years, I have said to the pastors and churches with whom I have been called to labor, that if there was not a revival of religion, I should not complain of the church, but take the blame mostly to myself, believing that if I am right and have power with God, others will feel the power, and sinners will be converted: there will be a revival."

C X In the ministerial work, success is a solemn, an imperative duty. If you fail, the fault is yours.)

If a minister finds that, with the utmost fidelity, he cannot succeed, he has mistaken his calling. He should get out of the way, and let a man called of God take his place.

His failure is that of the doctor who loses the patient that proper skill and care would have cured; of the General who suffers defeat when he should have conquered; of the pilot who drowns the confiding passengers whom he could have safely landed. It is not merely a misfortune—it is a crime—a crime whose disastrous results are as lasting as eternity.

The people should see to it that the preachers whom they support do the work—not of orators or business men, but of ministers of Jesus Christ. They would not employ a doctor, though he put on airs, and used words too learned for them to

understand, and gave a great deal of medicine, if his patients never recovered. A lawyer who talked eloquently, and quoted history and poetry, but lost his cases, would want for clients. So the friends of Jesus Christ should refuse to support a minister whose hearers all remain as proud, and worldly, and selfish as ever; though they may admire his elegant manners and eloquent discourses. It is a modern heresy that a preacher should be sustained, simply because he is a preacher. In the early days of Christianity, even a fallen church, refused to do that. The church of Ephesus was commended because, as was said to it: "Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars."—Rev. ii, 2. "Ye shall know them by their fruits."—Mat. vii, 16. If the people who stately listen to a preacher, do not bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, the failure is not relieved by the large congregations which he draws, or the great salary which he commands. (It is a crime against humanity; it is treason to Christ, to employ a minister who flatters the vanity, and gratifies the literary tastes of his hearers, but allows them to go on undisturbed to hell.) What matters it, though the pews be rented, and the expenses met, and the house crowded, if the hearers all remain destitute of that "Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."—Heb. xii, 14. See to it that your money and influence do not go to support preachers of this kind. That they should abound in these latter times is plainly predicted in the word of God: "Also of your own

selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”—Acts xx, 30. They shall train up teachers in abundance, who will not interfere with their pride or covetousness, but will please their ears and gratify their tastes. If you find yourself going after these preachers who are made by men, who look to men for their reward, and who in consequence, prophesy smooth things, you are in a dangerous condition. Insist upon it that the minister whom you support shall preach the word of God in all its purity, and with such divine unction that the fruit of his labors shall be apparent. To many who pay freely for the support of the Gospel, the expostulation of God is still appropriate: “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?”—Isa. lv, 1. Why do you encourage preaching that does not save the soul?

CHAPTER III.

HOW TO SUCCEED—SOUNDNESS OF FAITH.

"Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find."—*Jno. xxi, 6.*

Fishermen are not generally regarded as a cultivated class. Yet in their calling they are men of science. They have their theories—unwritten it may be—but they carry them into practice with the strictest fidelity. They go for fish where fish may be found. They use such instruments to catch them as experience shows are the best. They do not take a brass band to capture whales, nor a bugle to catch herring. So he who would catch men must adopt the proper measures to catch men. It is not enough that he desires success. He must use the means to secure it. He has to deal with the conscience and the will. Both, when perverted, are hard to be moved in the right direction. To do it, the great truths essential to man's salvation must be plainly presented, and faithfully applied. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."—*Jno. xvii, 17.*

He, then, who would be instrumental in saving men, must himself hold to the saving doctrines of the Gospel. The exhortation to him is: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."—*Tit. ii, 1.* But no one can speak properly of that which he does not understand. Men are

to be saved in believing the truth. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."—2 Thes. ii, 13.

It is one of the heresies of the age that "It does not matter what a man's doctrines are, if his heart is right." But here is the difficulty. If salvation comes through belief of the truth, how can the heart become right through belief of fundamental errors? But the "right heart" to which this saying refers, is one that is naturally amiable and kind, and not one that is right in the sight of God. Mere amiability is not Christianity. "A good natured heathen is not a Christian. The Gospel is not simply a system of ethics or a code of good manners. Christianity has its doctrines to be believed. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."—Mat. xv, 9. Says the great prophet of Israel: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain."—Deut. xxxii, 2.

(—Without a firm and intelligent belief in the doctrines of God, you will, if you attempt to reform others, be as likely to be yourself perverted from the truth as you will to convert them.) A Protestant young lady, intent on doing good, visited a poor, Catholic family, to minister to their bodily and spiritual wants. Meeting the priest there one day, she said to him in an apologizing way: "I am not trying to teach my doctrines."

"And pray, what may be your doctrines?" asked the priest.

To this question the young lady, though more than ordinarily intelligent, could make no reply satisfactory even to herself. The result was, as she had no doctrines which she firmly held, the priest instructed her in his, and had the satisfaction, not many months after, of receiving her into the Roman Catholic Church. (You will come in contact with able, positive men, into whose minds dangerous errors have been instilled from infancy. Unless the truth is ingrained into your very being, they will unsettle, and perhaps overthrow you.) You must be positive in your convictions ; then your language will be positive. You must declare truly, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know."—Jno. iii, 11. But if you are in doubt yourself, whether you are right, you will be led astray by those who are decided in their errors. The floating ship turns out for the imbedded rock. The wavering yield to those who are firm in their convictions. The learned travelers follow the ignorant guide, who with evident sincerity assures them that he knows every inch of the ground over which they wish to pass.

When the eloquent Apollos " was instructed in the way of the Lord, he began to speak boldly in the synagogue." The utterances of many, who preach the Gospel in honeyed phrases, are weak, because they are weak believers. Many fail to declare " the whole counsel of God," because they do not hold the Scriptures in sufficient authority. They substitute the Gospel of expediency for the

Gospel of the Son of God. On popular sins they touch but lightly, if at all. It is well if they do not apologize for some of the worst foes that true Christianity has to contend with. Their converts take up with a part of religion for the whole. They build with untempered mortar. Their edifice will not stand in the day of eternity.

CHAPTER IV.

CALL TO PREACH—HOW TO SUCCEED.

"Go thou to the sea and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up."—Mat. xvii, 27.

To succeed in any business, one must go about it with an undivided purpose. The ancients represented fortune as a jealous goddess. He who would win her must be unremitting in his devotion to her.

When the hands are engaged in one pursuit, and the mind, at the same time, is debating the question, whether they ought not to be doing something else, the probability is that nothing will be done as it should. You do not like to work for one unless you know he wants you.

God calls laborers to work for Him. Our Saviour says: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."—Mat. ix, 38. The harvest is the Lord's, and it is his prerogative to send out his workmen.

The Apostle avows his divine mission: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—2 Cor. v, 20. The Government chooses its own ambassadors. No one goes on this service because he thinks he is qualified for it and deserves it. What

—an absurdity then to think that God lets his ambassadors appoint themselves!

The Apostle tells us that he did not preach the Gospel simply from choice. “For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!”—1 Cor. ix, 16. Again, “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”—1 Tim. i, 12. It was not his talent, nor his learning, nor yet even his love for souls that enabled him to preach, but his being put into the ministry by the hand of God. He was confident he was in the right place.

But the Apostle declares that his call was not peculiar. Every true minister of Jesus Christ becomes such by the appointment of God. “And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”—Heb. v, 4. It is of the Christian priesthood that the Apostle is speaking. His language cannot well be more positive and plain. “Taketh” refers, not to the past, but to the present. (“No man” is an expression that admits of not a single exception. So that under no pretext whatever, may any one assume to be a minister of Jesus Christ unless he is divinely called.)

We see the reason why so many ministers are, so far as the real work of the ministry is concerned, useless. They are intruders. They have chosen the ministry for a profession, just as men choose the law, or medicine, to make a living. They

desire to do good to others, as a means to benefit themselves. They think that by proper training and study, they may fit themselves so as to meet the popular demand, and obtain a large salary. They may have their reward. The churches are too generally in the state predicted by the Apostle. 'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.'—2 Tim. iv, 3. That is, the people, rejecting the self-denying doctrines of the Gospel, and yet not prepared to reject Christianity, will establish theological schools, and raise up preachers who will preach to please them. The Gospel has won its way to honor. Whatever persecutions any denomination may be exposed to; however small a salary it may afford, there are men whose prospects for a living, and whose social position will be improved by becoming ministers among them. The people of God need spiritual discernment that they may recognize as ministers, the Lord's ministers, and reject all others. There are still those who will come to him that has influence in the matter, and "Crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."—1 Sam. ii, 36.

It is because our pulpits are filled with man-made preachers that our churches have become, as Joseph McCreery expressed it, "like the pyramids of Egypt, at once a temple and a tomb, filled with spiritual mummies sitting in Sardonic mag-

nificence, while the preacher's voice, instead of being the voice of the Son of God in its resurrection power, is lessened down to a reptile's whimper in these habitations of the dead."

(He who is called of God, preaches with authority. His credentials are from Heaven. } All who understand the language can read them. He can say—not to converts to himself, or his opinions, but to saints: "For the seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord."—1 Cor. ix, 2. Men look to him, and in their hearts, say with Cowper:

"There stands the messenger of truth; there stands
The legate of the skies. His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace."

Such a man does not shun to declare all the counsel of God.

Gideon Ouseley was a remarkably successful laborer in that most unpromising field—Ireland, among the Irish Catholics. After he was converted, his heart was touched with compassion for the unsaved millions around him. From the perishing he seemed to hear the cry: "Come over and help us." Within his heart, the Spirit said: "Go—go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Yet such was his sense of his own unfitness that he would say: "Lord, I am a poor, ignorant creature; how can I go? Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child."

Then the Lord would seem to say to him:

"Do you not know the disease?"

"O yes, Lord, I do."

"Then go and tell them of the disease and the cure."

"So then," he would say, "with only these two things, the knowledge of the disease, and the knowledge of the cure, I went forth. All glory to my divine Master!"

Whitefield, in one of his later sermons, says: "I never prayed against any corruption I had in my life, so much as I did against going into orders so soon as my friends were for having me go. Bishop Benson was pleased to honor me with peculiar pre-erment or to do anything for me. My friends wanted me to mount the church betimes. They wanted me to knock my head against the pulpit too young, but how some young men stand up here and there and preach, I do not know. However it may be to them, God knows how deep a concern entering into the ministry and preaching was to me. I have prayed a thousand times, till the sweat has dropped from my face like rain, that God, in his infinite mercy, would not let me enter into the pulpit till he called me to and thrust me forth in his work. I remember once in Gloucester—I know the room—I look up to the window when I am there, and walk along the street; I know the window upon which I have laid prostrate. I said: 'Lord, I cannot go; I shall be puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the evil. Lord, do not let me go yet.' I pleaded to be at Oxford two or three years more. I remem-

ber praying, wrestling, and striving with God. I said: 'I am undone. I am unfit to preach in Thy great name. Send me not, Lord—send me not yet.' I wrote to all my friends in town, that they would pray against the Bishop's solicitation; but they insisted that I should go into orders before I was twenty-two. After all their solicitations, these words came into my mind: 'Nothing shall pluck you out of my hands.' They came warm to my heart. Then, and not till then, I said: "Lord, I *will* go; send me when thou wilt." So he consented. On Saturday evening he retired to a hill near the town, and there prayed fervently for about two hours. The next morning he was ordained. "I trust," he said, "I answered to every question from the bottom of my heart; and heartily prayed that God might say, Amen. And when the Bishop laid his hands upon my head, if my vile heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit, soul and body, to the service of God's sanctuary. Let come what will—life or death, depth or height, I shall henceforward live like one who, this day, in the presence of men and angels, took the holy sacrament, upon the profession of being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon me that ministration in the church. I can call Heaven and earth to witness, that when the Bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him, who hung upon the cross for me. Known unto Him are all future events and contingencies. I have thrown myself blindfolded, and I trust, without reserve, into His

Almighty hands." Such was the call, and the response to it, of one whose career has had no parallel since the days of St. Paul.

The late Dr. J. W. Redfield was a wonderfully eloquent, faithful and successful preacher of the Gospel. Multitudes were converted under his labors. He attacked, with unsparing severity, the popular sins of the day; and insisted upon the most thorough work. He says in his Memoirs, as yet unpublished: "From my earliest childhood a strong impression followed me that God had designed me for the Gospel ministry. But so disagreeable to me was the thought, that I kept the whole matter a secret from even my nearest and dearest friends. . . . I found myself in every plan of life swayed by this one dreaded, and yet absorbing thought, I must yet preach the Gospel." At an early age, after a terrible struggle, he was converted. "I said to myself, if this is religion, the world will now very soon be converted; for I shall tell every one with whom I meet, and I can tell it so convincingly that they will certainly believe and seek and find. So ardently did I desire the salvation of men, that I felt I could have parted with my life to impart salvation to the world."

He went among his friends and told them what great things the Lord had done for his soul. Many were converted; but meeting with some severe rebuffs, he would gladly have settled down, but the call to preach kept ringing in his ears. "The cause of my distress at the thought of

preaching was this : I had contracted the idea that the most awful and solemn responsibility is connected with the office of a Gospel minister. I think I felt something as a man would, who, ignorant of navigation, was obliged to take charge of a craft freighted with human life, and liable at any time to run into danger. The responsibility to me was overwhelming. . . .

“I began now to settle the matter by reasonings, which brought me into great straits. Appetite and sleep forsook me, till in about two months I was worn down, weak and wasted.” He tried prayer ; but when the answer came, was so fearful of being deceived, that he would not accept the clearest answer. At one time he prayed out in the woods one winter night until his clothes froze to the ground. “In the cold snow I kneeled and pleaded with God, as a man would plead for his life to grant me this once such an answer as would forever settle my doubts. . . . I had such a sense of the awful majesty and near approach of an offended God, that my agony of body and soul was so extreme that I felt I could not live. I instantly shrieked out : ‘O God, remove this from me, and I will go immediately.’ ”

“Immediately this scene was removed when my doubting heart said : ‘I have seen no angel, and heard no voice, and how can I go on such a doubtful errand under these circumstances ?’ I went to a hill-top farther on, and again I kneeled down ; and there I continued in prayer till about sun-rise. Seeing that I was not likely to bring God to my

terms, I thought best to retrace my steps to the house. But on trying to rise, I found I was frozen to the earth. But so great was my distress of mind, that I did not once think that I was cold. I pulled my clothes loose from the frozen earth, and, after rubbing my limbs, so far regained their use, that, with difficulty, I began to move towards home. I passed the spot where the awful presence of God had so distressed me. I sat down upon a log, deeply grieved that I must be the victim of so much anguish and doubt, when God might so easily satisfy me. The thought came, 'Stand still and see the salvation of God.' Instantly the very sign I had asked for appeared. Still I was not satisfied." But at last every doubt was removed. "I now felt fully committed to do God's will. The unearthly sweetness and calmness that took possession of my heart, was beyond the power of words to express."

When at last he did go, multitudes were converted under his labors; for he went at the call of God.

"My soul is not at rest. There comes a strange
And secret whisper to my spirit, like
A dream of night, that tells me I am on
Enchanted ground. Why live I here? The vows
Of God are on me, and I may not stop
To play with shadows, or pluck earthly flowers,
Till I my work have done, and rendered up
Account.

Henceforth, then,
It matters not, if storms or sunshine be
My earthly lot—bitter, or sweet my cup;
I only pray—"God fit me for the work,
God make me holy, and my spirit nerve
For the stern hour of strife." Let me but know

There is an arm unseen, that holds me up,
 An eye that kindly watches all my path,
 Till I my weary pilgrimage have done—
 Let me but know I have a friend that waits
 To welcome me to glory,—and I joy
 To tread the dark and death-fraught wilderness.”

Not preachers only, but all Christians are called to labor to win souls to Christ. When Andrew had been a day with Jesus, “He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him. We have found the Messias, which is being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.”—Jno. i, 41, 42. This is the way true converts are multiplied. As soon as one is saved, he seeks to bring another to the fold. To do this he has God’s authority. “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”—Rev. xxii, 17. He who hears, that is, obeys God’s voice, has the right to invite others.

One of the most hurtful, practical errors of Protestantism is the idea, so widely prevalent, that to do efficient service for Christ, one must be an accredited preacher of the Gospel, and have the pastoral charge of a congregation. This is a great mistake. Many who feel a love for souls, take it for a call to preach. They get into the ministry; by dint of hard work keep their position, yet do but little good. Many do positive harm. The Roman Catholics manage such things better. If a person wishes to give himself up to doing good, the Church finds something that he can do, and sets

him at it, under her authority and control. In furthering her work, she employs every grade of talent, every degree of cultivation. So she has her teachers, and nurses working with her priests to spread and establish the Roman Catholic Church in the earth. But Protestants recognize only one authorized band of workers—preachers; and practically but one order of preachers—pastors. This is not as Christ intended. He calls others to his work, and he would have the Church recognize the call. X

“And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”—1 Cor. xii, 28. This was no temporary expedient, but a permanent arrangement. The phrase “hath set,” implies a fixed condition. But in the original, the word is one that in the New Testament is frequently translated, “ordained.” So this is an established order of Christ’s church that God has called others than ministers to labor for the salvation of souls. (Have it then firmly settled in your heart that whatever work you undertake for God is of his appointment. Then, if you do your duty, failure is out of the question.) X

CHAPTER V.

HOW TO SUCCEED—RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”—Mat. iv, 19.

x True religion has its seat in the heart. Christ says: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”—Jno. iii, 3. This statement applies equally to the kingdom in its incipency, and in its glory. (He who does not experience that radical, spiritual change implied in being “born again,” not only cannot see Heaven; but he cannot have a clear understanding of what it is that constitutes a Christian.)—Hearing a country described is not seeing it. One who has listened to preaching all his days, has, when he becomes converted, a different idea of the Christian religion from what he ever had before. He is in a **new creation**.

There is more in Christianity than can be gathered from books or teachers. A blind man may learn the theory of light. But open his eyes and he is in a new world. “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.”—Isa. liv, 13. Though one may have had the best instructors, yet if he is not taught of the Lord, he is not prepared to teach others the way of salvation. The Captain who understands navigation, in approaching a strange coast, gives the control of the ship to the pilot who knows the channel. An unlettered man

who enjoys religion, is a much safer spiritual guide than an unconverted theologian. One cannot teach what he does not comprehend. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."—1 Cor. ii, 11. One may have ever so much learning; but if he is destitute of the Spirit of God, he cannot comprehend the things of God. If he thinks he can, it only makes matters worse. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii, 14.

(The natural man can learn Hebrew and Greek; and science, and history, and oratory, and theology; but no amount of knowledge of this kind can qualify one to preach the Gospel, or to labor for souls. With all these, but without the Spirit, he may be unto the people "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;" but he will not be as one that speaketh in "Christ's stead."—Ezek. xxxiii, 32; 2 Cor. v, 20. He may amuse; but he will not convict of sin. He may touch the sensibilities; but he will not awaken the conscience.)

Richard Baxter says: "Do you think they will be hearty and diligent to save men from hell, who are not heartily persuaded that there is a hell; or to bring men to Heaven, who do not really believe that there is such a place? He who hath not such belief of the word of God, and the life to come

as takes off his own heart from the vanities of the world, and causes him diligently to seek his own salvation, cannot be expected to be faithful in seeking the salvation of other men. Surely he who dare damn himself, dare let others alone in the way to damnation; and he who will sell his Master with Judas, for silver, will not stick to make merchandise of the flock. I confess that man shall never have my consent to be intrusted with the care of others, and to oversee them in order to their salvation, who does not take heed to himself. Do you think it is likely that he will fight against Satan with all his might, who is his servant? or, will he do any great harm to the kingdom of the devil, who is himself a subject of that kingdom? or, will he be true to Christ who is in covenant with his enemy? And this is the case with every unconverted man, of what cloth soever his coat is made. They are the servants of Satan, and the subjects of his kingdom, and he worketh and ruleth in their hearts. What prince chooseth the friends and voluntary servants of his enemy to lead his armies into war against him? It is this that makes so many preachers of the Gospel enemies to the work of the Gospel which they preach. O, how many such traitors have been in the church of Christ in all ages, who have done more against Him under his colors, than they could have done in the open field. They have spoken well of Christ, Scripture, and godliness in general; and yet slyly done what they could to bring it into disgrace, and make men believe that those who

set themselves to seek"; God with all their hearts, were but a company of hypocrites or self-conceited fanatics. It cannot be expected that a slave of Satan should be any other than an enemy to the cross of Christ. What though they live civilly, preach plausibly, and have the outside of an easy and cheap religion; they may be as fast in the devil's snare by worldly-mindedness, pride, a secret dislike of strict godliness, or by a heart that is not rooted in the faith, and unreservedly devoted to God in Christ, as any others are by drunkenness, uncleanness, and such egregious sins. I know that a wicked man may be more desirous of the reformation of others than himself; and may, therefore, with some earnestness dissuade them from sin; because he can preach against sin at a far easier rate than forsake it. (Consider, that the success of your labors depends on the grace and blessing of the Lord; and where has he promised his assistance and blessing to ungodly men?) If he see it good to communicate to his church a blessing even by such, yet he does not promise them a blessing. To his faithful servants he has promised, that he will be with them, that he will put his Spirit upon them, and his word into their mouths, and that Satan shall fall before them as lightning from heaven. But where is there any such promise to the ungodly? Nay, do they not rather, by their abuse of his goodness, provoke him to forsake them, and blast their endeavors, at least as to themselves? For I do not deny but that God may, and sometimes does, do good to his church,

even by unconverted and wicked ministers; but not so usually, nor eminently, as by his faithful servants."

Dr. Judson, the Apostle of India, says: "Many Christians spend all their days in a continual bustle doing good. They are too busy to find either the valley or Beulah. Virtues they have; but are full of the life and attractions of nature, and unacquainted with the paths of mortification and death. Let us die as soon as possible, and by whatever process God shall appoint. And when we are dead to the world, and nature, and self, we shall begin to live to God."

Ministers who are lacking in religious experience, not only cannot build others up in a faith and holiness which they do not possess; but they will be very likely to bring down to their own level those under their care who have a deeper experience than themselves; or, failing in this, to persecute and oppose them.

Godless ministers are the real cause of the decline of the church in spirituality. They have been in all ages. The purest light shining through a colored medium, becomes colored. Worldly, time-serving preachers promote a worldly religion. They may multiply converts; but their converts mold the church more than the church does them. Constantine secured a greater accession to the church than the apostles did; but the church to this day has not recovered from the idolatrous spirit and heathenish practices which his converts introduced. It was at this period that the worship of

saints, the doctrine of purgatory and the celibacy of priests, had a beginning in the Christian church. They were borrowed from heathen Rome. "An enormous train of different superstitions were gradually substituted for true religion and genuine piety."* The whole ritual of the church underwent a change. "The rites and institutions by which the Greeks, Romans, and other nations, had formerly testified their religious veneration for fictitious deities, were now adopted, with some slight alterations, by Christian bishops, and employed in the service of the true God. These fervent heralds of the Gospel, whose zeal outran their candor and integrity, imagined that the nations would receive Christianity with more facility, when they saw the rites and ceremonies to which they were accustomed, adopted in the church, and the same worship paid to Christ and his martyrs, which they had formerly offered to their idol deities. Hence it happened that, in these times, the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little in its external appearance from that of the Christians. They had both a most pompous and splendid ritual. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers, processions, lustrations, images, gold and silver vases, and many such circumstances of pageantry, were equally to be seen in the heathen temples and in the Christian churches."†

* Mosheim's Church History, vol. i, p. 111.

† Ibid. p. 119.

Our Protestant denominations are undergoing a similar transformation. The worldly spirit is rapidly gaining the control. To promote a religion, one of whose cardinal virtues is humility, houses of worship are erected in such a magnificent and costly style, that one half of the expense can answer no possible purpose except to gratify and encourage pride. While the Gospel abhors caste, and offers its highest blessings freely to the poor; in these churches special concessions are made to the rich, because of their wealth; and the *right* to occupy a seat in time of public worship, is sold at a price which makes attendance upon church a luxury in which those of but little means cannot afford to indulge. Christ will not tolerate a rival. His language is exceedingly emphatic: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."—Luke xiv, 26. But these popular preachers encourage men to believe that they can come to Christ, without giving up even those associations which, when opened with prayer, forbid that this prayer shall be offered to Christ, or in the name of Christ! Thus, in the place of the Christianity of the Bible, a religion is promoted to which the world contributes the most practical part. Such religion answers some good purposes. It promotes to some extent, education, humanity, refinement. But it also does a great deal of harm. It deceives many to their eternal undoing. It quiets the conscience and lulls the religious sensi-

ilities to sleep. By its familiarity with divine things, it hardens the hearts of the victims it deceives and renders them well nigh insensible to the reproofs and warnings of God! It makes Pharisees instead of saints; it encourages the covetous and the pleasure-loving to hold on to their idols; it leads its votaries down to death in their delusions, and lands them at last in hell!

If you would then be successful in saving souls, you must yourself be saved. As you point others to Heaven, you must go before them in the path that God marks out. You must personally test the medicines which you administer to diseased souls. To the pastures to which you would conduct the flock of God, you must lead the way.

It may not be your fault that your talents are so greater, or your learning no more extensive. But these are not the main things to secure success to one who is laboring to win souls. (The important qualification is personal piety. If you do not have this in a degree that fits you to be a leader of the faith of God's people, it is your fault.) You alone are to blame. Your words which are now so powerless, would, if they came from a heart all on fire with God's love, attract attention and burn their way into the consciences of those who hear. Until you feel a deep sense of your need, you will not seek that which alone can supply it. All your resolutions to do better will be of no avail until you become better. Make the tree good. Begin at the right place. See to it that you have a religious experience, clear and well defined.

Some ministers say they cannot tell when their sins were forgiven. The strong probability is that such were never converted. They are religious, just as persons brought up in a state church are religious. They may be very zealous for the denomination; but they are strangers to a Christian experience. John Wesley says: "Can any thing, then, be more absurd than for men to cry out: '*The church!—the church!*' And to pretend to be very zealous for it, and violent defenders of it; while they themselves have neither part nor lot therein; nor indeed know what the church is!"

A minister may be zealous for his church, just as a lawyer is zealous for his client, because he obtains his living in that way, and has a reputation to make or to sustain. He may be sincere, and be a champion of orthodoxy, without ever having been converted. Paul says he may even be a martyr: "And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—1 Cor. xiii, 3.

John Wesley was a man quite as capable as any of judging of his own religious state. He says of himself: "I did go thus far many years, using diligence to eschew all evil, and to have a conscience void of offence; redeeming the time, buying up every opportunity of doing good to all men; constantly and carefully using all the public and all the private means of grace; endeavoring, after a steady seriousness of behavior, at all times, and in all places; and God is my record, before whom I stand, doing all this in sincerity; having

a real design to serve God ; a hearty desire to do His will in all things ; to please Him, who had called me to ‘fight the good fight,’ and to ‘lay hold of eternal life.’ Yet my conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, that all this time I was but almost a Christian.”* How many of our modern theological students can say that they are as religious as was this “almost Christian?”

Again he says: “It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity ; but what have I learned myself in the meantime ? Why (what I the least of all suspected,) that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God ; (I am not sure of this.) I am not mad, though I thus speak ; but I speak the words of truth and soberness. If haply some of those who still dream may awake, and see, that as I am, so are they. Are they read in philosophy ?—so was I. In ancient or modern tongues ?—so was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity ? I too have studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things ? The very same would I do. Are they plenteous in alms ? Behold I gave all my goods to feed the poor. Do they give of their labor as well as their substance ? I have labored more abundantly than they all. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren ? I have thrown up my friends, reputation, ease, country ;

* Wesley's Works, vol. i. p. 22.

I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands; I have given my body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil and weariness, or whatsoever God should please to bring upon me. But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not) make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in his sight? Yea, or the constant use of the means of grace? (which, nevertheless, is meet, right, and our bounden duty.) Or that I know nothing of myself; that I am, as touching outward, moral righteousness, blameless? (Or (to come closer yet) the having a rational conviction of all the truths of Christianity? Does all this give me a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian? By no means." He says he "even had the faith of a servant, though not of a son.")

Wesley was educated for the ministry. If he had refused to yield to his convictions, confess his true condition and seek for a thorough change of heart, he might have gone on, and become a respectable minister; and perhaps a bishop of the Established Church; but the world would never have heard of him as the originator of the greatest religious movement of the age. It is for want of this experience that so many talented, educated preachers are in reality doing so little. They take charge of a wealthy, established society, and if, by calling in the aid of worldly policy, they succeed in improving the financial condition of the church, their ministry is considered

successful. But, unless through it souls are saved, God counts it a failure.

We insist upon it, then, that those who labor for souls should be converted from the world, to Christ. There should be such a transformation wrought in them, by the Spirit of God, that all who know them will clearly see the change. They should have all the marks, and should bring forth all the fruits of converted souls.

But they should go farther than this—they should be wholly sanctified to God. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.”—Isa. lii, 11. As it is sin that defiles, this requires that those should be free from sin through whom the waters of salvation are distributed to a dying world. This is clearly promised: “I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.”—Ps. cxxxii, 16. But under the Christian dispensation, all believers are priests. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”—1 Pet. ii, 5. It is to all the saints that the Apostle is speaking. To clothe is to put on every necessary garment. If Christian priests are “clothed with salvation,” then are they redeemed from all sin. Their song is “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”—Rev. i, 5–6. This song of praise comes, not only from the glorified in Heaven; but from the saints on

earth. He who is washed from his sins, cannot yet be in his sins. Here on earth is this promise fulfilled.

A converted person who does his duty to God and his fellow-man, and so keeps clear from condemnation, will go on to full salvation. "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."—1 Jno. i, 7. Meeting all of God's requirements of us is what is meant by "walking in the light."

Samuel Rutherford was a Scotch Presbyterian, born about A.D. 1600. He was educated at the University and studied theology. In mature age he was converted. He says: "Like a fool as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the Heaven and near afternoon, before ever I took the gate by the end." But he was faithful to God and to his people. Though the Calvinistic doctrine, which he firmly held, calls infirmities sins, and teaches that it is impossible for us to be delivered from them in this life, yet he writes: "I have neither tongue nor pen to express to you the happiness of such as are in Christ. When ye have sold all ye have, and bought the field wherein this pearl is, ye will think it no bad market: for if ye are in Him all His is yours. . . . If one would have sworn unto me, I would not have believed what may be found in Christ. . . . The worst thing of Christ—His hard cross, His black cross, is white and fair; and the cross receiveth a beautiful lustre, and a perfumed smell from Jesus."

Edward Payson was for many years the successful pastor of the Congregationalist Church of Portland, Me. He died in 1827. Before commencing his ministry he made a written covenant with God. He had many conflicts, but grace triumphed. In A. D. 1816, he wrote to his mother: "Were it not for the dreadfully depressing effects of ill health, I should be almost too happy." He was a man of strong domestic affections, but he adds: "It seems to me that no domestic troubles, not even the loss of wife and children could disturb me much, might I enjoy such consolations as I have been favored with most of the time of late. I have, in the main, been favored with great liberty for me, both in the pulpit and out; and it has very often seemed as if—could I only drop the body—I could continue, without a moment's pause, to praise and adore to all eternity. This goodness is perfectly astonishing and incomprehensible. I am in a maze whenever I think of it. . . . Never did God appear so inexpressibly glorious and lovely as he has for some weeks past. He is, indeed all in all. I have nothing to fear, nothing to hope from creatures. They are all mere shadows and puppets. There is one *Being* in the universe and that Being is God; may I add, He is *my* God. I long to go and see him in Heaven. I long still more to stay and serve him on earth. Rather I rejoice to be just where He pleases, and to be what He pleases. . . . In the hands of Christ I lie passive and helpless, and am astonished to see how He can work in me. He does all; holds me up, carries me forward, works

in me and by me; while I do nothing, and yet I never worked faster in my life. . . . At the dedication of our conference house, and at a quarterly fast held in the same week, we enjoyed the divine presence in a greater degree, I think, than we ever did before as a church. I would not have given a straw for the additional proof, which a visible appearance of Christ would have afforded of his presence. And he has been wonderfully gracious to me ever since."

On his death bed, when asked: "Do you feel reconciled?" He replied: "O that is too cold. I rejoice! I triumph! And this happiness will endure as long as God himself; for it consists in admiring and adoring Him. I can find no words to express my happiness. I seem to be swimming in a river of pleasure, which is carrying me on to the great fountain."

The experience of James Brainard Taylor, of Professor Upham, of President Mahan, of the Congregationalist Church; of Dr. Edgar Levy, of the Baptist Church; and many others show that if converted souls will press forward as God leads, He will give them full salvation. (The great trouble is, many who are professionally laboring for the spiritual welfare of others, were never converted. Of those who were converted, many have lost their first love, and become formalists and Pharisees. We do well to heed the solemn words: *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.*)

CHAPTER VI.

HOW TO SUCCEED.—BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

“Or if he ask a fish, will He give him a serpent ?”—Mat. vii, 10.

We cannot impart to others what we do not ourselves possess. If man was not a fallen being, he might be saved by the truth alone. Then all he would need would be to know the truth. But this is not sufficient. Few there are who do as well as they know. “And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”—Jno. iii, 19. The reason why men are condemned, is because they know what is right, yet prefer what is wrong. This inclination to evil is overcome by the Holy Spirit. One man preaches systematic, eloquent, Gospel sermons. The people listen and admire; but no one is saved. Another goes to the same people with the new truth, with but little system in his plain, unvarnished discourse, and with many objectionable features in his manner. The fastidious are offended, but converted. A great and lasting revival follows. What makes the difference? The one “*ministers* the Spirit,” (Gal. iii, 5,) the other relies upon the logical presentation of the truth. Said an eloquent preacher at the close of a fruitless protracted meeting: “I cannot understand it. I preached these same sermons, in the same order at

L——, and there were two hundred converted." The first time he relied upon the Spirit; the second time he relied upon the sermons. From the earliest ages, the Delta of the Nile has been famous for its fertility. Here civilization commenced. For thousands of years abundant harvests have been reaped from the same fields. The inexhaustible fertility of the soil is owing to the annual overflow of the Nile. If the river keeps within its banks, it answers every purpose of navigation; but it does not enable the soil to furnish food for the people. A famine follows. So in the work of the Lord, with ordinary blessings, we can live in peace, and do our duties with calm composure. But that freedom from excitement, which the world so highly compliments, does not bring in a harvest of souls. (There is many a preacher, orthodox, upright, respectable; but he never does much good, because he is always so exceedingly proper. He never enjoys a freshet. To him the day of Pentecost never fully comes. He is a strong reasoner, a beautiful speaker; but powerless to turn sinners to God.) The Apostles had been called by Christ to the ministry. They had been fully instructed by the Saviour himself, in all the doctrines of the Gospel. The world was perishing for want of the truths they were commanded to proclaim. The great commission had been given them. Still they were held back by the command of their risen Lord. "But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."—Luke xxiv, 49.

They obeyed the command. They waited, as we should always wait for a blessing, in earnest prayer. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women."—Acts 14. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit came upon them. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."—Acts ii, 3, 4. They were now ready for work. Peter preached to an audience as deeply prejudiced, we may suppose, as ever sat under the sound of the Gospel. It was to the people that had crucified his Master. Peter did not smooth the matter over, and apologize for their wicked conduct. He charged them plainly, and repeatedly with their crime. "Him ye have taken, and your wicked hands have crucified and slain."—Acts 23.

And again: "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."—Acts ii, 36. Yet such was the divine power attending his words, that conviction seized the hearts of the people; "And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."—Acts ii, 41.

(This "power from on high," is the great, *essential* qualification for those who would labor for the salvation of others. Nothing can take its place. No natural gifts, no degree of learning can form a substitute. They may do their part; but their work is not the work of the Spirit. Fire can only be kindled by fire, latent or manifest. So the Spirit

of God in one person, finds its way to the heart of another.

We need the Spirit to enable us to present to the people the class of truth which is adapted to their spiritual condition. This is equally true of those who labor in public, and of those who labor in private. Many seem to think that, if they speak the truth, nothing more is needed. This is a great mistake. In dealing with souls, not only is truth called for; but the particular truth appropriate to their present wants. Too little regard is paid to adaptation. In soul saving, as in medicine it is everything. A drug-store is full of remedies. Each may be good in its place. But he who should take from the drug-store whatever comes to hand and give it indiscriminately to the sick, would be much more likely to kill than to cure. His intention may be good, but his practice is bad. Many sermons are lost because they do not meet the necessities of those who hear. Ministers of ability and experience often preach sermons that have not the slightest adaptation to their congregations. In the time of a revival they preach so as to quiet, rather than to alarm.

In no work is greater skill required than in the cure of souls. You cannot always determine the religious state of a person from his appearance. Some who seem careless, may be slowly dying of despair. Others appear uncommonly wicked, who put on a reckless air to hide conviction. The study of books will not qualify you to prescribe for souls. The skill to save them cannot be gained from

experience. We must have the Holy Spirit to point out the disease and the remedy, or we work at random. Those for whom we labor will still be unsaved. Where we should awaken, we shall encourage deluded souls to hold on to their false hopes; where we should "lift up the bowed down," and "strengthen the feeble knees," we shall lay upon them heavy burdens, grievous to be borne."

"Persuasion comes not by toil or art;
Hard study never made the matter clearer;
'Tis the live fountain in the preacher's heart,
Sends forth the streams that melt the ravished hearer."

To have spiritual discernment we must have the Spirit. Without it we shall be like one who shoots at random. With it we can go into a strange congregation and present the truths they need to hear. We shall not want any one to tell us the spiritual condition of the people. We shall preach from inspiration, and not from information. But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."—1 Cor. xiv, 24, 25. Under such preaching, some of the hearers get the impression that the preacher knows all about them. The blows are not merely heavy, but well directed. So fight I, not as one that beateth the air."—1 Cor. ix, 26. But it cannot be denied that many, from the pulpit, "beat the air." They aim at nothing. They repeat what they have heard from

others, or have read in books. They may be eloquent, or even instructive; but they only lull their hearers to sleep, and cheer them on in their way to hell.

He who preaches as the "Spirit gives him utterance," has a message direct from God. As he declares the truth, conscience makes the application, and whispers to the listener: "Thou art the man." He may be young and unlearned; but he prevails in the battle against sin, and comes out exulting, "Blessed be the Lord my strength which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight."—Ps. cxliv, 1. "The very flashing of his sword scatters his boasting foes." They see that he is terribly in earnest, and wields a weapon not forged by human hands.

We need the Holy Spirit to regulate our methods of dealing with souls. In the work of saving men—whether in public or in private—much depends upon the manner. In a critical disease the nurse is second only to the physician. The efficacy of the remedy depends greatly upon how it is administered. So in our dealing out the truths of God. "Were I to say to this people," said one preacher to another, "the same things you do, they would ride me out of town on a rail. Yet they take it from you without a word." One spoke in the tenderness, and with the unction of the Holy Ghost. The other seemed to say, by his manner, "I'll give it to you. You shall have the truth, whether you like it or not." Of course he only stirred up opposition.

Some are professional in their manner. There

are certain things expected of them, and their effort is to meet the expectation. There is so much service to be rendered for so much pay; and their chief anxiety appears to be to render the service in such a manner as to secure their pay. They are always exceedingly proper. They manifest a commendable degree of zeal; but it is easy to see that it is the zeal of the advocate endeavoring to earn his fee. There is no deep concern for souls; no outgushing sympathy for the perishing. The effort is to do their duty—to do it faithfully, so as to give no just cause of complaint. This is all right so far as it goes. It may answer the purpose of securing position and salary; but it does not result in the salvation of men. Such have their reward. They obtain what they seek—reputation and money. But they will be poor to all eternity. The Holy Ghost will take away the cold, professional air, by making you earnest, and simple-hearted. You will appear to care more for the salvation of men than you do to preach a good sermon; because you would a thousand times rather see them saved than have it said that you preached a good sermon.

Some are affected in their manner. They act, with greater or less proficiency, a part which they have learned. They affect a pathos which they do not feel. They have tears at their command; but, like drops of rain from a cloudless sky, these tears do not penetrate the surface. Real sympathy is wanting. But few are imposed upon; and their delusion is of but short duration. People soon

come to look upon these manifestations as a mere matter of form. The lion-skin put on for effect, fails of its effect as soon as the imposition is detected. Of all dead forms, a form of power without the power, is the most offensive. There is beauty in the motion of living beings; but there is scarcely anything more revolting than the motions of a dead body galvanized into an appearance of life.

Some are so constrained in their manner, that they cannot suitably express what they really feel. They have strength; but they are tied up. They have a sound experience; but no freedom of utterance. What they say is good; but it is in such a stiff way that it loses much of its force.

Now, what is requisite to correct all this ineffectiveness of manner is—not practice, nor instruction—but the gift of the Holy Ghost. He will, by taking away the fear of man, and giving us a great love for souls, make us appear, at the same time, both fearless and gentle; both earnest and natural. All the arts of which rhetoric and elocution are masters, are but the flimsiest substitute for the Holy Ghost. He will correct our manners by correcting us. He makes the fruit good by making the tree good.

(We need the Holy Spirit to give unction to our words, and make them successful in the salvation of souls. He gives a power that nothing else can impart.)

At the Black Creek camp-meeting, held in the summer of 1857, in Allegany County, N. Y., there was a wonderful out-pouring of the Spirit. Many

were converted, and many were sanctified to God. One day, in a social meeting, we saw a woman deeply affected. We spoke to her, but found she was deaf and dumb. A young woman had been seen conversing with her, by signs. She was hunted up, and found to be her daughter. We requested her to ask her mother what was the matter. She did so, and then herself burst into tears. In answer to her inquiry, the mother, by signs, said: "I want to become a Christian, and go to Heaven."

We all dropped upon our knees, and fervent prayer was offered for her salvation. Soon the joyous expression upon her countenance, told that she had passed from death unto life. Through her daughter she said that she felt that her sins were forgiven, and she was a child of God. In the closing Love Feast she tried to give her testimony. We have seen congregations greatly moved under the weighty words of burdened hearts, but we never saw one more sensibly affected than when this poor, deaf and dumb woman arose, and with tears streaming down her face, and her hand first laid upon her heart and then pointed towards Heaven, she struggled to tell what great things God had done for her soul. Nearly every one was affected to tears. It was not eloquent speech that melted the woman's heart; for she heard none; it was not well-chosen words that enabled her to reach other hearts—for she uttered none. It was in both cases the Spirit of God.

Says Spurgeon, the celebrated English preacher:

“The Holy Spirit is able to make the word as successful now as in the days of the apostles. He can bring in by hundreds and thousands as easily as by ones and twos. The reason why we are not more prosperous is, that we have not the Holy Spirit with us in might and in power, as in early times. If we had the Spirit sealing our ministry with power, it would signify very little about our talent. Men might be poor and uneducated; their words might be broken and ungrammatical; there might not be any of the polished periods of Hall, or the glorious thunders of Chalmers; but if the might of the Spirit attended them, the humblest evangelist would be more successful than the most learned of divines or the most eloquent of preachers. (It is extraordinary grace, not talent that wins the day. It is extraordinary spiritual power, not extraordinary mental power, that we need.) Mental power fills a chapel; but spiritual power fills the church. Mental power may gather a congregation; spiritual will save souls. We want spiritual power. Oh! we know some before whom we shrink into nothing as to talent, but who have no spiritual power, and when they speak they have not the Holy Spirit with them; but we know others—simple hearted, worthy men—who speak their country dialect, and who stand up to preach in their country place, and the Spirit of God clothes every word with power. Hearts are broken, souls are saved, and sinners are born again. Oh, Spirit of the Living God! we want thee, Thou art the life, the soul, the source of thy people’s success. Without thee they can do

nothing. But with thee we can do all things."

President Finney mentions the following incident which occurred at New York Mills, while he was holding meetings there, which shows how God can work through those who are filled with the Spirit, even when they say nothing. "I went into the factory to look through it. As I went through, I observed there was a good deal of agitation among those who were busy at their work. On passing through one of the apartments, where a great number of young women were attending to their weaving, I observed a couple of them eyeing me and speaking very earnestly to each other; and I could see that they were a good deal agitated, although both laughed. I went slowly toward them. They saw me coming, and were evidently much excited. One of them was trying to mend a broken thread, and I observed that her hands trembled so that she could not mend it. I approached slowly, looking on each side at the machinery, as I passed; but observing that this girl grew more and more agitated and could not proceed with her work. When I came within eight or ten feet of her, I looked solemnly at her. She observed it, and was quite overcome, and sunk down, and burst into tears. The impression caught almost like powder, and in a few moments nearly all in the room were in tears. This feeling spread through the factory. Mr. W.—, the owner, an unconverted man, seeing the state of things, said to the superintendent: Stop the mill, and let the people attend to re-

ligion; for it is more important that our souls should be saved than that this factory run.' The gate was shut down; they all assembled in a large room in the mill, and," adds Mr. Finney, "a more powerful meeting I scarcely ever attended. The revival went through the mill with astonishing power, and in the course of a few days, nearly all in the mill were hopefully converted."

In the summer of 1858, we commenced holding meetings on the dock in Buffalo. Our congregations were large, orderly, and attentive, though composed, in great part, of men and women as depraved as the city could furnish. Soon the interest became so great that we felt the need of a room in which we could hold social meetings for the benefit of those whom the Lord awakened. Brother T. S. LaDue went with us into a saloon on Canal street, to hire a dance hall over head for prayer-meetings. We succeeded. Meetings were held there, and many sinners were converted. The genuineness of the work was evidenced by a lasting reformation. Among the converts was a young woman who kept one of the worst places in that worst locality. She said she was in the saloon when we went there to hire the hall. We did not speak to her or notice her. But she said she saw that we were not of that class of men that generally went there. A trembling seized her, and to throw off the feeling, she uttered an oath. Still, as she looked at us, hoping that we would say something that would give her an opportunity to abuse us, she trembled worse than ever, and then

went up to the bar and called for a drink. From that time she was under such conviction that she could find no rest. She soon became converted, and abandoned her vicious course of life. She lived a devoted Christian a number of years and died in holy triumph.

(We cannot attach too great importance to the necessity of our having the Holy Spirit. To one who labors for souls, it is as indispensable as moisture is to the farmer; or as fire is to the engineer. With the best of talents, education, experiences, and opportunities, you can do but little towards taking souls to Heaven, if you are destitute of the Spirit.)

James Caughey was an ordinary preacher, filling common appointments, with common credit. He gave himself up fully to God, and sought and obtained the fullness of the Spirit: and he went through Great Britain and America as a flame of fire, and brought tens of thousands of souls to Christ.

President Finney, in speaking of revivals that occurred under his labors, says: "I am not quite sure that I have laid as much stress as I intended upon the manifest agency of the Holy Spirit, in those revivals. I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I always in my own mind, and practically, laid the utmost stress upon this fact, underlying, directing, and giving efficiency to the means, without which nothing would be accomplished. Unless I had the spirit of prayer, I could do nothing. If even for a day or an hour I lost the

spirit of grace and supplication, I found myself unable to preach with power and efficiency, or to win souls by personal conversation."

"I would repeat, with *great emphasis*, that the difference in the efficiency of ministers does not consist so much in the difference of intellectual attainments as in the measure of the Holy Spirit which they enjoy. And how abundant do the facts that lie right upon the face of the church's history demonstrate the truth of the assertion!

(Whatever the age or the learning of a minister may be, he is a child in spiritual knowledge, experience and qualifications for his office, without the baptism of the Holy Spirit.) Until he knows what it is to 'be filled with the Spirit,' to be endued with power from high, he is by no means qualified to be a leader in the church of God. A thousand times as much stress ought to be laid upon this part of a thorough preparation for the ministry as has been. Until it is felt, acknowledged, and proclaimed upon the house-tops, rung through our halls of science, and sounded forth in our Theological Seminaries that this is altogether an indispensable part of the preparation for the work of the ministry, we talk in vain and at random, when we talk of the necessity of a thorough preparation and course of training."

President Edwards, as a reasoner, had few equals. Yet his main reliance was not upon his logic or his learning; but on the Holy Spirit. He says: "The gracious and most excellent kind of assistance of the Spirit of God in praying and

preaching, is not by immediate suggesting of words to the apprehension, which may be with a cold, dead heart, but by warming the heart, and filling it with a great sense of those things that are to be spoken of, and with holy affections, that that sense and those affections may suggest words. Though clearness of distinction and illustration, and strength, and reason, and a good method in the doctrinal handling of the truths of religion, is many ways needful and profitable, and not to be neglected, yet an increase in speculative knowledge in divinity, is not what is so much needed by our people, as something else. Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching that has the greatest tendency to do this."

(There is not a preacher called of God to labor for souls, but that the Holy Spirit can make him successful. There is not a disciple of Christ, of gifts so humble that the Holy Spirit cannot make him useful.)

Are you convinced of this? Then let your first endeavor be to be "filled with the Spirit."—Eph. v, 18. This is a plain command. Can we disregard it and be innocent?

But it is promised in the most positive and persuasive language: "Ask and it shall be given you."—Mat. vii, 7. "But may I claim this?" Yes; though you have grieved the Spirit a thousand times. It is added: "For every one that asketh receiveth." Here the only condition is to

ask. But it is implied that you ask in sincerity. If you sincerely ask, there is not the slightest doubt but that God will give you His blessed Spirit. It will work in you, but perhaps not at first as you expect. As He moves you, if he would, have you make a confession, do not attempt to exhort or reprove others. Make the confession, with all humility. (There are two ways of increasing the power of falling water; raise the dam, or lower the channel. It may not be possible to raise the dam; but you can lower the channel. So you will always find that the lower you humble yourself, the more power you will have with God and men.) Obey the Spirit, and more of the Spirit will be given you. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."—Acts v, 32. To those that obey the drawings of the Spirit, the fullness is given.

So there can be no possible excuse for any one to be destitute of the Spirit. "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—Luke xi, 13. You have nobody but yourself to blame if you are without that degree of the Holy Spirit which will make you wise in winning souls to Christ. If you have not the Spirit, it is because you are too proud to humble yourself; too selfish to make the needed sacrifice, or too indolent to ask. You cannot read carefully scarcely any portion of the Bible and not see that God is willing to give

to all his children that degree of divine influence that will fully qualify them to meet successfully all the duties and trials of life. Settle it that, at whatever cost, you will have every gracious qualification for your work that God will give. Insist upon having fulfilled in yourself the promise made of old: "I will also clothe her priests with salvation and her saints shall shout aloud for joy."—Ps. cxxxii, 16.

Do not be alarmed because, when you are baptized with the Spirit, you begin to suffer persecution. Many turn back at this point. They are not quite sure that it is persecution. Those who have been warm friends, turn coldly from them, and give them to understand that they think they are going too far and becoming crazy or fanatical. They reason over it, conclude it may be so, go no farther, and settle down into a respectable formality. This is the case with thousands. The light that was in them has become darkness. In time they themselves become persecutors of the Holy Ghost in the persons of those who follow Him. For any one, in any church, to give himself up to be fully led by the Spirit of God, requires the martyr spirit. But time is short; eternity is at hand. Have no concern what your enemies may say of you. Keep in close union with the Lord. Live in the Spirit; walk in the Spirit and your life will be successful and its end triumphant.



CHAPTER VII.

THE STANDARD.

“There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes.”—John vi, 9.

Every school has a course of study adapted to its object. A medical college does not require its students to pass examination in the studies which it is necessary for those to understand who desire to become lawyers. A preparatory school aims to have its scholars meet the requirements of the college they expect to enter.

The object in getting men converted to Christ is, that they may be fitted for Heaven. God has prescribed the qualifications necessary for admission to HIS HOLY PLACE. These qualifications no man, however learned—no body of men, however respectable, can alter or abridge. We may state, but we cannot change them. To place the standard too high, discourages—too low, deludes and destroys. It is difficult to conceive of any greater harm that a man can do than to deceive multitudes, to their eternal ruin.

Preachers are as liable to backslide as any other class of men. When they do backslide in heart, they often become exceedingly dangerous. They are more social and complaisant than ever. They keep up a decent observance of the forms of religion. They place the standard of piety so low

as to please the worldly and pleasure-loving. So it frequently happens that they have more personal adherents, than when they enjoyed religion. Their growing popularity deceives them; as they are deceiving others. But our Saviour says: "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."—Mat. xv, 14. The deceived and the deceiver shall perish together.

Bishop Hedding said, in an address to the Genesee M. E. Conference in 1842: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, is an admonition necessary for ministers as well as for the people. Men are liable to be deceived with regard to their own conversion, and to satisfy themselves with a work of the imagination instead of the work of the Spirit. Let us, therefore, compare our experience with the word of God, and satisfy ourselves that we are truly born of the Spirit.

We are in danger of being deceived in another way. Having been really born of God, we may backslide in heart, lose the Spirit we then received from Heaven, and yet retain the form, the morals and the profession of Christianity, and still persuade ourselves that we are as pious as when we were warm in our first love! Let us look into this matter, and see whether we are, indeed, as near to Christ as when we were first made partakers of his love. We ought to be nearer; we should be growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

* Life and Times of Elijah Hedding, p. 578.

Though a preacher may, in his sermons, hold fast to the form of sound words, yet he will not enforce upon others an experience which he does not enjoy. If he comes short of a saving knowledge of the truth, so, as a rule, will his converts. Not only will water not rise higher than its fountain; but it will not rise higher than the highest point of the conducting pipe through which it flows.

The prevailing standard of piety is, in many respects, below the Bible standard. People become so accustomed to it that, until their attention is called to the fact, they fail to notice it. The lower the standard, the better it suits the perverted taste.

Hence the faithful preaching of the truth, in the most affectionate manner, often provokes the bitter opposition of religious people. But he who would do work for eternity must not hesitate on that account to insist upon everything that God insists upon. The painter has his picture in his mind before he puts it upon the canvass. For one to become a saint, he must have a tolerably correct idea of what it is to be a saint.

President Finney says: "Until we can put away from the minds of men the common error that the current Christianity of the church is true Christianity, we can make but little progress in converting the world. For, in the first place, we cannot save the church itself from bondage to the world in this life, nor from the direst doom of the hypocrite in the next. For this religion of the mass of nominal professors does not answer the

descriptions given of true piety in the word of God."*

Mr. Finney held meetings extensively all over the country, and was acquainted with the most spiritual of the churches. During the few years that have elapsed since his active labors, were closed, there has been a great decline in piety.

Bishop Foster, of the M. E. Church, is reported by one of the church papers as saying recently in a public address: "Just now four out of five, with their names on church rolls are doing nothing—almost absolutely nothing. Four out of five contribute but little to the treasury of the church's benevolence, and four out of five do nothing in the line of personal work for Christ. They go to church perhaps once on each Sabbath, if the weather is not inauspicious; and when the next Sunday comes, and the conditions are the same, they go again; so on, through the weeks, and months, and years, and God's blessed cause is not made one whit stronger in numbers or influence for their living."

Of course, then, they cannot be in a state of salvation. For Christ says: "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."—Mat. xii, 30. Such people must be converted to God in order to be saved.

Bishop Peck, of the same church, says: "There is a general impression that many members are not useful, not holy in life, not worthy representatives

* Finney's Theology, pp. 362-3.

of practical Christianity, really a burden, and not a help to the church. But the extent of the sad fact is not seen, that the cold, worldly or indifferent in our midst are really a large majority, and that the church is compelled to bear the reproach of a vast multitude of sinful men. Nor is the peril of these brethren fully appreciated. It comes to be considered so much a matter of course, that the evil is looked upon as irremediable; and the few go on to bear the burdens, and do the work which belongs to the many, and charity becomes indifference. Discipline is hence rare, and finally impossible. An attempt to expel even the incorrigible, awakens surprise, and even bitter opposition. Crimes sufficient to exclude a man from the kingdom of grace and glory, come to be considered venial, and the pastors and members who attempt a godly discipline, become the accused, persecuted criminals. Let me distinctly, but with tender concern, say that this represents a fact so large as to explain, to a great extent, our failures in church reforms and Christian power; and calls for the most rousing, pathetic, and persistent appeals from the pulpit and the press."

It must not be supposed that, with such a state of things it is difficult to have a revival. On the contrary it is easy, when the people become used to it; and are brought to think that it may be true religion after all. Men are naturally religious as well as naturally selfish. Persuade them that religion will interfere but little, if any, with their selfish desires, and they are willing to become religious. Hence,

in Roman Catholic countries all are zealous members of the church. Some are ready to fight for it, who do not go near it, except when unwell and afraid they are going to die. Some of the most zealous church members we have ever met, were openly carrying on the most infamous business that a human being can be engaged in.

[This readiness to be religious when persuaded that religion will not interfere with the calls of selfishness, accounts for the sweeping character of fashionable revivals.] All admit that it is a good thing to have religion; and when it costs no self-denial, but is made to minister to pride, why should not all have it? Such religion deceives, but does not save those who have it. As President Olin says: "Faith in Christ, and a resort to the Gospel for pardon, and purity, and eternal life, presuppose an unconditional submission to its terms. I know well that a multitude, even of professing Christians, begin and prosecute what is called a religious course on a very different plan. They give law to religion. They retain as many indulgences, and concede as many sacrifices, as may fall in with their tastes. They make provision for pride, and ambition, and sensuality, and self-will, and 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ,' only in so far as they think he may set off their own purple and fine linen to the best advantage."*

That such a course is but too common none can deny. These are the ones who swell the list of

* Dr. Olin's Works, vol. 2, p. 133.

converts, when neither repentance nor separation from the world is insisted upon, and the people are taught that nothing is necessary "only to believe." But are such people safe? The eminent divine last quoted, says: "I take it upon me to warn all who wish to be saved by Christ, to beware of admitting *any worldly, or selfish motive or consideration whatever* into the settlement of this great question between God and their souls. I take it upon me to proclaim, that all such tampering in the business of religion will certainly prove fatal to any well founded hopes of success in the Christian career.

Whoever stops to inquire whether it may cost him sacrifices to be a Christian, with any intention to hesitate if it does, has admitted a consideration utterly incompatible with his becoming a Christian at all.

Whoever chooses his creed or his church with any, the slightest, reference to the honor, or ease, or the emolument, which it may give or withhold, does, by such an admission, utterly vitiate all his claim to have any part or lot in the matter of saving piety. I do not speak of those who knowingly and deliberately make these their chief ground of preference; but I affirm that it is wholly anti-Christian, and an insult to the crucified Saviour, to yield any, the smallest place to worldly motives in choosing the Christian position which we will occupy. Let Christ and conscience decide this matter. 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.' The Gospel will admit of no compro-

rise here. This is its point of honor, which it cannot, and will not, yield by a single iota. I feel called upon to use the language of unmeasured denunciation against a mistake, so often fatal to hopeful beginnings in religion.”*

To persuade the people that they can become Christians without separating from the world, without giving up what God requires them to give up, is cruelty to man and rebellion against God. Some of the severest denunciations of the Bible are against false teachers. When the Lord reproved the Israelites for their universal covetousness, he immediately added, as the cause of this sad state of things: “From the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.”—Jer. vi, 13, 14. This is the climax of wickedness. See to it then that you do not, from any consideration, put the standard of Christian experience and practice lower than the Bible does.) By insisting upon unconditional submission to God you may have fewer converts, but you will have more stars in the crown of your rejoicing; you may obtain a smaller salary, but you will be richer to all eternity. Your work will abide. The fruits of your labors will be seen on earth, in the holy lives of those who are saved through your labors; and you will be rewarded in the world to come for your fidelity. “Go through, go through the gates;

* Olin's Works, vol. 3, p. 243.

prepare ye the way of the people ; cast up, cast up the highway ; gather out the stones ; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh ; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.”—Isa. lxii, 10–12. That is, Be aggressive. Wherever there is an opening, go to sinners with the offer of mercy. Remove every stone of stumbling, by confession, restitution, and reformation. Point out plainly the highway of holiness. Show that God promises salvation from sin to every Christian. The result will be, those who heed your message will be called “The holy people.”

No matter what opposition it may provoke, hold up the Bible standard of Christianity. Do not delude any into the belief, now so common, that if they embrace correct opinions they are safe. As Dr. Judson says : “Let us depend upon it, that nothing but real faith in Christ, proved to be genuine by a holy life, can support us at last. That faith which consists merely in a correct belief of the doctrines of grace, and prompts to no self-denial—that faith which allows us to spend all our days in serving self, content with merely refraining from outward sins ; and attending to the ordinary duties of religion—is no faith at all. O, it is a solemn thing to die—an awful thing to go into eternity, and discover that we have been deceiving ourselves.”

But it is still more dreadful to make it a business to deceive others! And to make a living by this soul-damning business! Better beg or starve. It is because the churches are filled with converts of this kind that so many prominent church members turn out great criminals. They were sincere; but never converted. As Isaac Taylor says: "When professors of religion are suddenly found to be wanting in common integrity, or in personal virtue, no other supposition is admitted by the world than that the delinquent was always a hypocrite; and this supposition is, no doubt, sometimes not erroneous. But much more often it has surprised himself not less than others; and is, in fact, nothing more than the natural issue of a fictitious piety, which, though it might hold itself entire under ordinary circumstances, gave way necessarily in the hour of unusual trial." Artificial religion not only fails to impart to the mind the vigor and consistency of true virtue, but withdraws attention from those common principles of honor and integrity which carry worldly men through difficult occasions. The enthusiast, therefore, of all men, the one who is the worst prepared to withstand peculiar seductions. He possesses neither the heavenly armor of virtue nor the earthly."*

John Wesley says of those "who imagine themselves Christians and are not." "These abound, not only in all parts of our land, but in most parts

of the habitable world. That they are not Christians, is clear and undeniable, if we believe the oracles of God. For Christians are holy ; these are unholy. Christians love God ; these love the world. Christians are humble ; these are proud. Christians are gentle ; these are passionate. Christians have the mind which was in Christ ; these are at the utmost distance from Christ. Consequently, they are no more Christians, than they are archangels. Yet they imagine themselves so to be ; and they can give several reasons for it. For they have been *called* so ever since they can remember ; they were *christened* many years ago ; they embrace the Christian opinions, vulgarly termed the Christian or Catholic faith. They use the *Christian modes of worship*, as their fathers did before them. They live, what is called a good *Christian life*, as the rest of their neighbors do. And who shall presume to think or say that these men are not Christians ?—though without one grain of true faith in Christ, or of real, inward holiness ; without ever having tasted the love of God, or been ‘made partakers of the Holy Ghost.’ Ah, poor, self-deceivers ! Christians ye are not. But you are enthusiasts in a high degree.”*

But it is necessary not only to hold up the standard, and come up to it yourself ; but you must bring enough up to it to make a pattern for others. In promoting a revival, this is the first thing to be done. “As is the mother, so is the

*Wesley's Works, vol. i, p. 337.

daughter."—Ezek. xvi, 44. The church is the mother; the converts, the daughter. If the church is proud and worldly, her converts will be still more so. The greater number of sinners that are brought into such a church, the greater harm is done. Churches are sometimes ruined by revivals. A large number of converts are brought in who did not confess and forsake their sins, but mistook the satisfaction they felt at making a move in the right direction, for the witness of the Spirit. The great effort now is to keep these along until they become established members of the church. The preacher must "prophesy smooth things," the saints must be careful in their testimony; the very truth which these converts need to lead them out into the light, must be suppressed; so the whole church backslides in order to nurture and encourage those who, at the first, were but "partially awakened. If these converts become permanent members, the worldly element gains control of the church. If they give up, the church becomes discouraged, and its efforts to convert sinners, are feeble and spasmodic.

It is a great help to a revival, to have every member a living Christian. This is as it should be. It was for this purpose that Christ died. Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."—Eph. v,

25-27. Sin makes spots. Neglect to be renewed by the Spirit, causes wrinkles. The experience becomes old and dry. When a church, sanctified and cleansed, has a revival, the converts are clear and strong, and there is a probability that they will go on in their experience, and hold out faithful to the end.

(The way to hell is just as direct from the church as from the world. Sinners in it will as certainly perish as sinners outside) Our object should be, with the Apostle, "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."—Col. i, 28. It would seem as if this might be done with those who care enough about the church to unite with it. They take upon them the vows of God, and it ought to be an easy thing to lead them on to the enjoyment of the fullness of grace. It would be, if they were honest and earnest in the matter. But some are not. Many are, in a great measure, influenced by selfishness. They go with the popular current. Some are fettered by secret, oath-bound societies, and they cannot break their chains without fearful risk to their property, their reputation, or even their lives. Others are guilty of sins which they are unwilling to confess; of perpetrating wrongs, which they will not make right. Others are under the dominion of pride. Of such material is too large a portion of many of the professed churches of Christ composed. To wait until these all get right with God, before you look for the conversion of sinners, would be, practically, not to expect sinners to be converted. To say that God will

not work under such circumstances, is an unfounded assertion. The Bible does not tell us that God has placed any such restrictions upon the operations of his grace. On the contrary, Christ says: "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."—Mat. xviii, 19.

Two is as small a number as can be agreed. So if you can get two of one accord, in one place, to start with, who are right with God, and with man, you may hope for a revival, and expect success. But do not appear to carry the idea that you think the church is right, when you know it is "conformed to the world." Hold up the standard where God has placed it. Take those who welcome the light, and when they get power with God, use them as your working force, and make a vigorous effort for the salvation of souls. No matter what may be the opposition, if you work with God, you will succeed.

At one place where, though we preached as plain as we could, we were in danger of having a popular, superficial revival, we secured the attendance from abroad of some old saints who were free in their souls. They were greatly blessed; and testified in the Spirit. Then the people seemed fully to understand what we meant by being converted to God. The work went from that time deep and thorough, in the face of bitter opposition from the Presiding Elder and such of the official members as he could influence.

Paul says of saints: "Ye are our epistle written

in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."

—2 Cor. iii, 2, 3. Many who do not read the Bible, read those who profess to be Christians.

(See to it, then, that those who labor with you in your efforts to convert sinners, do not when they are read, contradict the Bible, in their spirit, in their dress, and in their lives.) Have your witnesses agree. Would you expect to win a case in court if your own witnesses were equally divided, and plainly contradicted each other on the point at issue? So, though you have the Bible as a clear witness to the truth you preach, yet if those whom you endorse as Christians, in their lives contradict the Bible, people of discernment will pay but little attention to what you say. In a foundry, the greatest care is given to the pattern. If that is wrong, the labor is lost. Protest against it as you may, yourself and those whom you endorse as "workers together with God," will be taken for the pattern. You cannot prevent it.

Of itself, it is no evidence that we are right, or that God is with us, simply because converts are made through our instrumentality. The true test is found, not in their number, but in their character. In the classic fables, it is said that a fox once ridiculed a lioness because she had but one whelp. The reply of the mother of the monarch of the forest was: "One, but a lion." One real convert

to God is, for all purposes for which the Christian religion was instituted, worth more than a thousand who have mistaken conviction for conversion; or who have been simply converted to the minister, or the church, or been made fiery partisans, or fierce bigots. He who makes the gate so broad that men can pass through it with their passions and their prejudices; without renouncing the world, or confessing their sins, or repairing the wrongs which they have done to others, will not want for disciples in this fallen world. To him who does not wish to be at the trouble of gaining the victory over himself, it is very agreeable to be persuaded that he cannot be free from sin in this life, and that if he is faithful to his duties; that is, supports liberally "the church," and its institutions, the atonement of Christ will be brought in as a supply for all his deficiencies. Many will freely pay the man who, with zeal and ability, defends them in a course so pleasant to their depraved natures.

The religious character of converts partakes very largely of that of the church and minister who were instrumental in their conversion. If the church is corrupt, her converts will be corrupt. If the older members tolerate oppression; love money, and pleasure, and fashion, and dress, the converts will soon learn to surpass them in all their vicious indulgences. The whip in the hand of the back-slidden father, becomes a scorpion in the hand of the degenerate son. Christ designed that his disciples should be looked at. "Ye are," said he, "the light of the world."—Mat. v, 14. But what is a

light good for if it is not to be seen? Hence the reason why so much importance is attached in the Bible to having the church right. If she is wrong, all her seeming successes but pave the way for defeat and ruin. Noble fruit never grows on a degenerate plant; sweet waters never emanate from a bitter fountain; and humble, devoted, God-fearing, zealous converts are seldom found in a lukewarm church.

It is of no use for professors to come together, and with affected zeal, try to get sinners converted unless they are themselves saved. They make a failure if they get no converts; and if they get any, they make a worse failure. Cakes of ice frozen together, may make a show and glitter in the sun; but they only constitute an iceberg after all; and the larger the size, the more dangerous it is.

Men usually get converted to the standard of piety that is held up in the preaching to which they listen, and the testimony which they hear, and the lives of the representatives of Christ with whom they are familiar. How important then that the church should be pure! To secure this, strive with the utmost diligence.

This is the course our Saviour took. He labored with His disciples until there was a complete change in their characters before he sent them out to convert others. Then, persecution did not either make them angry at their enemies, or discouraged. When they met with success they were not puffed up so that God had to lay them aside. Their converts were like them.

A great part of the preaching of the Bible is addressed to the professed children of God. One reason for this, doubtless is, that the world may, through them, learn the true nature of pure religion. Christians are the representatives of Christ on earth. It is important that they should not misrepresent Him.

Do not, in your zeal for holiness as a distinct blessing, take it for granted that the church is in a state of salvation, when it is evident that the most of the members have lost their first love, and are under condemnation. This is often done. Those who have backslidden in heart and in life are urged to seek entire sanctification; and, almost as soon as they make the effort, they are encouraged to think they have obtained it. The committal of themselves by standing up, or by singing a verse, is deemed sufficient; they are then constrained to believe that they do receive the blessing; and, though not conscious of any change, yet they are told, by faith to profess it. This is no exaggerated statement. Such a course is wrong, and, though apparently eminently successful, it works injury in the end, both to the individuals who are persuaded to adopt it, and to the cause of God. But as it requires no humility, no repentance, no confession of sin, it is exceedingly popular. Those who take this easy course, feel better while the delusion lasts; but they, sooner or later, find that they have been deceived. If they are of an even disposition, they may maintain their profession for years with credit; but they are

powerless in their labors, and, at best, lead a life of negative goodness. Many who, professing holiness, are inconsistent in their daily walk, or doing but little for the cause of God, would have been a power in their day, if when, under condemnation for sins committed and duties neglected, they were induced to seek the blessing of holiness, they had, as the first step towards obtaining it, obeyed the Saviour's direction: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent."—Rev. ii, 5.

"The saint that wears Heaven's brightest crown,
In deepest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down,
Then most, when most his soul ascends.
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility."

In the kingdom of Christ, he who is kept from humbling himself, is deprived of the exaltation which is sure to follow. There is nothing that will so certainly bring the blessing of God upon our souls as humbling ourselves before Him; and there is nothing that so humbles us as taking upon ourselves the blame for our misconduct and confessing it to Him, and to those who have suffered by it, or have been witnesses of it. Though we may accept it as a welcome discovery to be shown that we can return unto the Lord without humiliation, when away from Him, yet if we follow this route, so pleasing to self, we shall find that it, in reality, takes us farther away from Him; and ends in "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his

power."—2 Thes. i, 9. Humility is a grace that is never found alone. It has many others in its train. It is the crown jewel of the Christian.

Encouraging those to seek for holiness who would seek for pardon, lowers the standard of Christianity. It places entire sanctification in the place that justification should occupy, and promotes a subtle sort of Universalism, by assuming that those in the church are justified who give no more evidence of being Christians, than the moral and amiable, outside of the church. The tendency is to obliterate the distinction between the church and the world, and to make Christianity consist in a careless acceptance of its doctrines, an occasional attendance upon its rites, and a decent observance of the proprieties of civilized life.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREACHING.

"Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord. and they shall fish them."—Jer. xvi, 16.

Preaching is of divine appointment. The preacher will never be superseded. Through the press a great work is being done in publishing, explaining, and defending religious truth; but the press can never take the place of the living preacher in enforcing upon man the claims of God. The persuasive tongue, the melting eye, the enkindling emotion, and the earnest manner, are all brought into requisition in the effort to turn sinners to righteousness. The promise, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Mat. xxviii, 20,) implies that the preacher is to continue while the world stands.

There is so much preaching that apparently accomplishes so little, that the tendency among even the devout is, to under-estimate the importance of preaching. What is needed is, to bring it back to its God-ordained use as a means of saving men. "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."—1 Cor. i, 21. But to accomplish this end, you must proclaim truths

which will save people when they cordially embrace them.

Men are by nature and practice sinners, inflated with self-importance: and it has no tendency to lead them to "abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes," to hear from the pulpit essays that flatter their vanity and minister to their pride.

If a man wants science, he knows where he can find its truths more accurately stated than you can state them.

He may be worldly; but he comes to church for quite a different purpose than to be instructed in worldly matters. He has the heart-ache; can you cure it? Not by your egotistical display of knowledge. He has, under a careless exterior, fearful forebodings of the wrath to come. Can you remove them? Not by puns, or tropes, or even syllogisms.

Preaching, to promote God's work, must be scriptural. One plain text proves more than a dozen arguments. Logic can be met with logic, but from the word of God there is no appeal. Your opinion will convict nobody; your affirmations, however positive, possess no authority; your thoughts may be profound, but no one will expect to be damned for not receiving them; but a **THUS SAITH THE LORD** will arrest the attention, disarm logic, and, if anything will, bring the sinner to his knees. Metaphysical dissertations may confound the intellect; historical disquisitions may instruct; rhetorical flourishes may captivate the imagination, but the conscience will remain untouched.

Give the people the simple word of God. Explain it clearly, apply it faithfully, and with the authority of Heaven, and with the unction of the Holy Ghost, and men will quail and tremble before you. If you are an ambassador of God, talk like one. Your business is, not to give currency to your own views, but to make known the requirements of your Master. Tell us the nature of his demands and the consequences of non-compliance. You cannot coax men to become saints. You may induce them to come to church by flattering their pride, in giving them, for a suitable consideration, a prominent pew, where, Sabbath after Sabbath, the gay attire of the family may be displayed for admiration. You may induce them to assume the profession of a Christian by persuading them that little or no self-denial will be required, and that such a step will be, in every respect, greatly for their advantage, but what has the cause of Christ gained by your seeming success? You have deceived souls—it may be to their eternal ruin. You have made hypocrites, and not Christians. You have betrayed Jesus into the hands of his enemies. “For whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God.”—Jas. iv, 4. You have filled the church with those whose friendship for the world has never abated one jot or tittle. And yet you report a glorious revival! Such revivals have made the Romish church what she is, and are in a fair way of bringing the Protestant churches into a state of formalism far less respectable than hers, and equally damning.

The commands of God should be proclaimed. They are still binding. The moral law has never been repealed. The ten commandments, as expounded by our Saviour, reaching to the purposes and thoughts of the heart, are still in force. Their vigor is not weakened by age, nor lessened by distance. Their demand upon us for obedience is as imperative as when they were first proclaimed amid the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai.

✕ Men should be made to feel that the law of God is binding upon them, without any regard to their professions. Sinners think they are under less obligation to obey God because they do not profess to obey Him. This is a great mistake. It is adding rebellion to transgression. Yet the preaching of the day often produces this impression. It should be removed. Press it home upon the consciences of all that God must be obeyed; that His authority is paramount to all other authority, and that it extends to all His creatures, whether in the church or out of the church. A rebel is none the less a rebel because he boasts of his treason—nor is a sinner's guilt lessened by his glorying in his shame. It is painful to witness the blindness of even intelligent Christians in this respect. They talk as if they think that the measure of their duty is the exactions of the church to which they belong, instead of the word of God. Cite them to plain commands of the Bible which they habitually violate; and the reply is, "O, our church, or our minister does not think it is necessary to be strict on that point." What nonsense! Is the church,

authority, where it allows practices which conflict with the word of God? If you think so, you should go to the Romish church! You have no business in a Protestant communion. Does your minister's approbation sanctify an act which the Almighty forbids? Then you should install him as a priest, and invest him with the attribute of infallibility! We need a revival of Protestant Christianity. The claims of God should be insisted upon with all earnestness and authority. Make sinners feel that pardon is a free gift, of boundless magnitude, and that in seeking the Lord they do not confer any favor upon him, but are themselves the recipients of the most amazing grace. If there are any converts under this preaching, there will be a strong probability of their being converted to God, and not to you. They will not need to be petted, and put into office, and made a good deal of to keep them along. The religion of men who will not be religious unless they can be made prominent, and can have their own way, is worth but little. It is of no account whatever, as far as saving the soul is concerned.

Men should be taught that God's law can be obeyed. It was meant for us, and not for angels. It was proclaimed after the fall, so that, when it was enacted by our compassionate Heavenly Father, He took fully into account our degenerate condition. He knew all about our temptations from within and without. He framed its provisions to suit our condition as a race.

When men endeavor to make out that the law

of God is something so high, and wonderful, and mysterious that nobody ever did or ever can keep it, they in reality, though without designing it, argue that God is a great tyrant. For is not that tyranny which enacts laws that cannot, by any possibility, be kept, and then affixes the most fearful penalties for their violation? This is not the character of our Heavenly Father. He is just and merciful. His law is holy, and just, and good. The very existence of an enactment made by Him, is of itself proof of the most conclusive kind that it can be obeyed by those for whom it was designed. Let men see that God's law can be kept, and ought to be kept, and then they may become scripturally convicted of sin. The terrors of hell will get hold of them. They will find themselves in trouble, and they will be glad to be helped out. They will not need a great deal of persuading to induce them to come to Jesus. Not until men discover that they are sick do they want a physician—not until they are slain by the law, will they seek to be made alive by Christ. But when they see that they are totally and eternally ruined unless a mighty deliverance is wrought out in their behalf, and when they realize that there is help for them in no other source but in the Gospel, they will gladly come to the Saviour, and will not seek to make their own conditions. Their agonizing cry is: "O, wretched man that I am, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—Rom. vii, 24.

They will accept the Gospel as gladly as

the ship-wrecked mariner hails the life-boat sent for his deliverance.

For declaring the law, we have the fullest warrant in the New Testament. Our Saviour says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."—Mat. v, 17. But not to preach the law as binding, is to destroy it. Paul preached very plainly the doctrine of salvation by faith. Yet he asks the question: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law."—Rom. iii, 31. But not to preach the law is to make it void. It is practically to assume the authority of repealing it altogether. And St. James declares that, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."—Jas. ii, 10. And the Revelator cries out: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—Rev. xxii, 14.

So we see that the moral law has not been repealed in the New Testament; but re-enacted. It is still binding, in all its force. Men should be made to realize that they must either obey its commands or suffer its penalties. Acts of Parliament, and of Congress, may be evaded; but God's law will, in the end, triumph over all opposers.

We need a sturdier class of Christians. We shall never see them, until the law of God is again proclaimed. Sentimental preaching makes sentimental Christians. They will do to swell the

numbers and make a show ; but for peopling Heaven they are worthless. As to self-denial, they are strangers to it. They can no more endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ than a child can endure the rigors of a military campaign. Place them in positions where there is a conflict between their worldly interests and the commands of God, and self invariably has the preference. Too many such disgrace the Christian name. They are not the men of whom martyrs are made. Heaven has none such within her borders. If you would see converts that are not ready to yield to every little difficulty ; who will refuse compliance with customs and fashions, however popular, that are contrary to the word of God—men and women of principle who can be relied upon in an emergency, proclaim the law of God, and insist upon its claims.

John Wesley says: “ I think the right method of preaching is this: at our first beginning to preach at any place, after a general declaration of the love of God to sinners, and his willingness that they should be saved, to preach the law, in the strongest, the closest, the most searching manner possible ; only intermixing the Gospel here and there, and showing it, as it were, afar off.

After more and more persons are convinced of sin, we may mix more and more of the Gospel, in order to beget faith, to raise into spiritual life those whom the law hath slain; but this is not to be done too hastily neither. Therefore it is not expedient wholly to omit the law; not only be-

cause we may well suppose that many of our hearers are still unconvinced; but because otherwise there is danger, that many who are convinced will heal their own wounds slightly; therefore it is only in private converse with a thoroughly convinced sinner, that we should preach nothing but the Gospel."

"For the commands are food, as well as the promises; food equally wholesome, equally substantial. These, also, duly applied, not only direct, but likewise nourish and strengthen the soul."

"All this, I conceive, is clearly declared in one single passage of Scripture :

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb."—Ps. xix, 7-10. They are both food and medicine; they both refresh, strengthen and nourish the soul.

Not that I would advise to preach the law without the Gospel, any more than the Gospel without the law. Undoubtedly both should be preached in their turns; yea, both at once, or both in one; all the conditional promises are instances of this. They are law and Gospel mixed together."*

*Wesley's Works, vol. vi, pp. 556, 557.

Preaching should leave upon the hearer the impression that he is under obligation to obey the commands of God—that he cannot disregard them with impunity. It is not enough that he believes that it would be for his advantage to be a Christian—he should be made to see, that if he is not, he is in a state of rebellion against God, and is justly exposed to the righteous retribution of his violated law. It was this kind of preaching that made Edward's converts as unlike the converts of many of the popular evangelists of the day, as if they had embraced an entirely different religion. They were humble and serious; they renounced the world, its pride, its pleasures, and its associations. There was an evident difference between them and those who did not profess to be converted.

But no matter how much others pervert the Gospel of Christ, by making it the minister of sin, and by holding up the atonement as the substitute for holy living for all who believe it; no matter how little stress is laid by preachers generally upon the commands of God, you must not run to the opposite extreme, and neglect to preach the Gospel—to explain the nature of salvation by Christ and to enforce a hearty compliance with its conditions.

Do not so constantly talk about the glories of Heaven that the people will lose sight of the fact that they can get there only by the way of the cross.

Do not, on the other hand, dwell so exclusively

on the conditions, that your hearers will conclude that it is impossible for any ordinary person to be a Christian ; and that the advantages will hardly repay for the sacrifices you must make. You cannot place Christianity in too attractive a light. Do not make it appear as a burdensome necessity—an irksome duty. Do not contradict Christ. Insist upon the truth of His words: “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”—Mat. xi, 30.

— The meaning of the word “Gospel” is, good news—glad tidings. Present it to them as a message of joy and gladness. If it is a light in your own soul, open the shutters and let it illuminate the darkness without. If His “word is in your heart as a burning fire shut up in your bones,” open the doors and impart the heat to the frozen souls around. If you find that God’s “loving kindness is excellent,” then invite “the children of men to “put their trust under the shadow of his wings.”—Ps. xxxvi, 7.

— No amount of plain preaching can reform men unless it brings them to Christ. They know that they are slaves to sin ; but they do not know that there is deliverance. You may show them ever so clearly that they should turn from their bad habits, but it will be of no avail unless you convince them that there is power in the Gospel to break every fetter from the soul. Paley said of the preaching of his day: “We have preached morality until there is scarcely a moral man left in the kingdom.”

Chalmers, one of the greatest preachers of his

day, says in a sermon to the people with whom he labored in his early ministry:

“I cannot but record the effect of an actual, though undesigned experiment which I prosecuted for upwards of twelve years amongst you. For the greater part of that time, I could expatiate on the meanness of dishonesty, on the villany of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny—in a word, upon all those deformities of character which awaken the natural indignation of the human heart against the pests and the disturbers of human society. Now, could I, upon the strength of these warm expostulations, have got the thief to give up his stealing, and the evil speaker his censoriousness, and the liar his deviations from truth, I should have felt all the repose of one who had gotten his ultimate object. It never occurred to me that all this might have been done, and yet every soul of every hearer remained in full alienation from God; and that even could I have established in the bosom of one who stole, such a principle of abhorrence at the meanness of dishonesty that he was prevailed upon to steal no more, he might still have retained a heart as completely unturned to God, and as totally unpossessed by a principle of love to Him, as before. In a word, though I might have made him a more upright and honorable man, I might have left him as destitute of the essence of religious principle as ever. But the interesting fact is, that during the whole of that period in which I made no attempt against the natural enmity of the mind to God, while I was inattentive

to the way in which this enmity is dissolved, even by the free offer on the one hand, and the believing acceptance on the other, of the Gospel salvation; while Christ, through whose blood the sinner, who by nature stands afar off, is brought near to the Heavenly Lawgiver whom he has offended, was scarcely ever spoken of, or spoken of in such a way as stripped him of all the importance of his character and his offices, even at this time I certainly did press the reformations of honor, and truth, and integrity among my people; but I never once heard of any such reformations having been effected amongst them. If there was anything at all brought about in this way, it was more than ever I got any account of. I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and the proprieties of social life had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners. And it was not till I got impressed by the utter alienation of the heart in all its desires and affections from God; it was not till reconciliation to Him became the distinct and the prominent object of my ministerial exertions; it was not till I took the Scriptural way of laying the method of reconciliation before them; it was not till the free offer of forgiveness through the blood of Christ was urged upon their acceptance, and the Holy Spirit given through the channel of Christ's mediatorship to all who ask Him, was set before them as the unceasing object of their dependence and their prayers; it was not, in one word, till the contemplations of my people were turned to these great and

essential elements in the business of a soul providing for its interest with God and the concerns of its eternity, that I ever heard of any of those subordinate reformatations which I aforetime made the earnest and the zealous, but, I am afraid, at the same time, the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations. Ye servants, whose scrupulous fidelity has now attracted the notice and drawn forth in my hearing a delightful testimony from your masters; what mischief you would have done had your zeal for doctrines and sacraments been accompanied by the sloth and the remissness, and what, in the prevailing tone of moral relaxation, is counted the allowable purloining of your earlier days! But a sense of your Heavenly Master's eye has brought another influence to bear upon you; and while you are thus striving to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things, you may, poor as you are, reclaim the great ones of the land to the acknowledgment of the faith. You have at least taught me that to preach Christ is the only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches; and out of your humble cottages have I gathered a lesson, which I pray God I may be enabled to carry with all its simplicity into a wider theatre, and to bring with all the power of its subduing efficacy upon the vices of a more crowded population."

It is of the work of Christ throughout the whole of the Gospel dispensation that it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He

hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”—Luke iv, 18, 19. These words are, to say the least, to have a spiritual application. Examine this wonderful passage. Take it up, item by item. The work of the minister, as here set forth, is one that commends itself to the favorable attention of every one that is afflicted or distressed. But these compose the mass of the human family. Go to them not only with a heart of sympathy ; but full of confidence that you have a remedy for all their ills. You may be rejected at first ; but if your own soul is out of prison and you are rejoicing in the warm sunshine of God’s love ; some will, if you open the door, come out with you into the light, and join you in singing songs of deliverance. When you remind men of their poverty, show them how they may obtain the “gold tried in the fire,” that they may be rich. To those who, on account of their own sins or the sins of others, are broken-hearted, you can offer a remedy that will heal every wound that sin has made. There is nothing that men need to know more than the power of the Gospel to remove their wretchedness, and make them happy. This it does by destroying sin, the great cause of unhappiness.

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”—Rom. i, 16, Salvation from

what? Let the angel of the Lord answer: "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for he shall save His people from their sins."—Mat. i, 21. Salvation from sin is not the special privilege of the favored; but it is for *every one* that believeth. Make the people see that this is what the Gospel undertakes to do. It does not set men upon reforming themselves by their own efforts; but offers them the gracious influences of the Spirit, to give them victory over sin. "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace."—Rom. vi, 14. This is spoken to every child of God.

Preach then, this Gospel of deliverance. Do not attempt to reform men, by assaulting their sins one by one; but when you convince them of their sinfulness, press upon them the promise: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 Jno. i, 9. You can depend upon this treatment. It is always effective. Many preachers who really want to do good, utterly fail because they endeavor to get men right, by attacking in detail, everything small and great, which they think is wrong. They go to work with souls as a doctor would with one sick with the small-pox, if he should make an application to each pustule upon the surface, instead of prescribing for the disease of which the breaking out is only one of the symptoms.

"The leprosy lies deep within."

Sin cannot be cured by outward reformation.

It is not surface-healing only that is needed, but a restoration to health of the entire system. This the Great Physician is able to effect. Go to a world morally diseased, lying upon the verge of eternal death, which philosophers have endeavored in vain to reform, "which has suffered many things of many physicians; and is nothing bettered, but rather grows worse," and assure the suffering that Jesus is able to make them every whit whole. Great as is the harm done by neglecting to preach the law of God, a still greater is done by neglecting to preach the Gospel, in its fullness and power. Many listen all their days to what is called evangelical preaching, without getting a distinct idea of what the Gospel proposes to do for them in this life.

Years ago we passed through a mountainous region in Pennsylvania, where the land could have been readily bought for ten dollars an acre. Since then that same land has been sold for more than a thousand dollars an acre. What made the difference? The land remained as rough as ever; but men sunk wells a thousand feet deep, and "the rock poured them out rivers of oil."—Job. xxix, 6. So this Gospel which demands of these who embrace it, so much self-denial, and appears so unattractive upon the surface, will, when you discover all there is in it, prove to be a treasure hid in the field, "which when a man hath found, for joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field."

CHAPTER IX.

HOW TO PREACH.

"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught."—
Luke v, 4.

If, when the prodigal was coming to himself, one had been sent to him from his father, inviting his return, the chief thing that would have influenced him, would have been the message. Yet while he was undecided, the character of the messenger, and the zeal, or the indifference with which he delivered his message might have turned the scale.

In preaching, the main thing is the matter, and the religious state of him who delivers it. Yet the manner of presenting truth has much to do with its acceptance or rejection. The same things said by Whitefield and by some other man would have affected very differently a congregation to which both were strangers.

Preaching should be plain. The people should never be at a loss to know at what the preacher is aiming. His statements should be clear. Whether his congregation agree with him or not, they should have no doubt as to what he means. He should use such words as both himself and his hearers understand. Great words do not make a great sermon. Preachers sometimes make themselves ridiculous by using words of which they do not know the meaning. A college President went

out to preach to a church usually supplied by students. An old lady at the close of the sermon, expressed to him the great satisfaction she felt at being able to understand him.

"The students often use words that I do not understand. You are so learned, I supposed I should not understand you at all; but I understood every word you said."

The President replied, "One object of education is to enable one to make things plainer."

Said Archbishop Leighton to his clergy: "How much learning, my brethren, is required to make things plain."

Macaulay was one of the most learned men, and keenest critics, of his day. He says that in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two great, creative minds. One of those minds produced the "Paradise Lost," the other, the "Pilgrim's Progress." Of the work of "the illiterate tinker," he says: "The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader, and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few technical terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the

orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of plain workingmen, was perfectly sufficient." Nor was Macaulay alone in his opinion. He says, "Dr. Johnson, all whose studies were desultory, and who hated, as he said, to read books through, made an exception to "Pilgrim's Progress." That work, he said, was one of the two or three works which he wished longer. It was by no common merit that the illiterate sectary extracted praise like this from the most pedantic of critics, and the most bigoted of Tories."

(Not only use plain words, but make your meaning plain by illustrations. In this, follow the example of Christ. He seldom presented truth in the abstract. He gave it a body that men could see and grasp. Take His Sermon on the Mount. Even the leading propositions are not affirmations about particular virtues—but about human beings in whom these virtues are found. He does not say, "Blessed is poverty of spirit;" but "Blessed are the poor in spirit." He does not say, "Truth is conservative;" but of those who receive it and live it: "Ye are the salt of the earth." His shortest discourses abound in illustrations.

There are but few who can secure the attention of a congregation by bare statements of truth. But apt illustrations awaken attention and fix themselves in the memory. To obtain these, keep your eyes open. When you see anything that interests you, ask yourself the question what truth does this explain? What application can I make of this to benefit others? Thus, every where you go, you

can, if you are devout and active, be gathering up the very best material for sermons. It will be all the more forcible for being original. Second-hand illustrations often lose much of their force.

History, both sacred and profane, can be made to furnish telling illustrations of the truth of God. The people generally are not so well acquainted as they are presumed to be with the historical facts recorded in the Bible. But even if they were, facts do not lose their power to furnish instruction, by being somewhat familiar. They are rather, on that account, the better fitted for this purpose. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." —1 Cor. x, 11. God's nature has not changed. He is just as much disposed to reward obedience, and punish disobedience, as He was in the days of Joshua and Achan. Only he does not do it in the same way. His resources are boundless. Study sacred history then, not merely to become acquainted with the facts; but to learn the principles that underlie them, and the truths they enforce and illustrate.

If you endeavor to teach religious truth by reference to the works of nature, be true to nature. Observe carefully. If you allude to any of the arts or trades, take pains to be correct in every allusion which you make. Quote your proof texts accurately.

But one of the most effective ways to illustrate the truth is from your own experience. I know

this has nearly gone out of fashion. The reason is, not because we have so much humility, but because we have so little experience. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—Mat. xii, 34. This is as true of preachers as of others. If our souls are filled with joy and peace, we cannot well help speaking of it. We talk of the greatness of divine love, "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."—Rom. v, 5. In all other matters, men speak of what they feel deeply; especially if it is calculated to benefit others; why should they not in religious matters?

Thus preaching should, to a much larger extent than it does, take the form of testimony. "Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are my witnesses."—Isa. xlv, 8. Neither the prophets nor the apostles were ashamed to testify to their own experience of Divine grace, when they commended that grace to others. The Psalmist says, "Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."—Ps. lxvi, 16. So Peter and John said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."—Acts iv, 20. In all of the Epistles there are frequent references to the experience of the writers. When Paul would urge upon others the necessity of dying to the world, he says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,

who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God.”—Gal. ii, 20, 21. Such references by the preacher to his own experience, not only illustrates the truth, but carries it home with power to the hearts of the hearers.

You cannot be faithful in the work of soul-saving, without, if you are observing, gathering a fund of facts from the experience of others which you can, in a proper way, use to advantage. But you must remember that people are extremely sensitive to anything said of them in public. Make no personal attacks upon any one, either in the pulpit or in the altar. Never speak of any individual in a way that is calculated to bring him into contempt.

Preaching, to do good, should be in a simple, unaffected style. A sermon is not an oration, nor an essay. It is from the Latin *sermo*, a talk, a speaking. If you are in the ministry merely as a profession you cannot be simple, because you are an intruder. You will fall into declamation, or essay reading, or worse still, into an affected simplicity. But if you are in earnest, and love the souls of the people, you cannot fail to address them so as to be understood. Says Luther, “When I am in the pulpit, I consider who my hearers are: and because the greater part are simple and unlearned, I preach what I think they can understand. In this I act like a kind mother who gives her craving infant the breast, thus feeding it with her own milk as she is able, and thinking this better for its nourishment than if mixed with the sweet-

est and choicest syrups and preparations of art.”
 For a preacher purposely to use “high-sounding words” to show off his learning, plainly discovers the vanity of an unsanctified heart. Cowper says:

In man or woman—but far most in man,
 And, most of all in man that ministers,
 And serves the altar,—in my soul I loathe
 All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;
 Object of my implacable disgust.
 What! Will a man play tricks,—will he indulge
 A silly, fond conceit of his fair form,
 And just proportion, fashionable mien,
 And pretty face,—in presence of his God?
 Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
 As with the diamond on his lily hand,
 And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,
 When I am hungry for the bread of life?
 He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames
 His noble office, and, instead of truth,
 Displaying his own beauty starves his flock!
 I seek Divine simplicity in him
 Who handles things Divine ; and all besides,
 Though learned with labor, and though much admired
 By curious eyes and judgments ill-informed,
 To me is odious.
 I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,
 Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
 That he is honest in the sacred cause ;
 To such I render more than mere respect,
 Whose actions say that they respect themselves.

Wesley's views were similar. “I design plain truth for plain people ; therefore of set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations : from all perplexed and intricate reasonings ; and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scripture ; I labor to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life.”

Preaching should be addressed to the conscience. The truth may be clearly stated; facts and arguments may be presented; the Scriptures may be explained; all this is right and proper. But the preacher should not stop here. No matter how clearly the understanding may be convinced, how deeply the affections may be moved, unless in addition, the conscience be quickened, the hearers will remain much as they were.

When the Scribes and Pharisees came to entrap the Saviour with a question of the law, he, in a few words, so applied the law to them that "They which heard it being convicted, by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last."—Jno. viii, 9. There was nothing harsh in what he said. He made no accusations; but the arrow hit the mark. They were wounded in a vital part.

Paul preached in the same way. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."—2 Cor. iv, 1, 2. Here the Apostle declares his call to the ministry, his experience, his patience, his boldness, his honesty, and his wisdom. All men have a moral sense. They know right from wrong. It is this chiefly which distinguishes a man from a brute. It is the highest power in man. With the approval of this ennobling faculty we can endure

privation, and distress, and reproach ; and triumph over all. It may be perverted ; but it is always a power. Sustained by this, the Mohammedan rushes to a battle as to a feast ; the Hindoo bears, without flinching, the utmost of physical torture, and the Christian martyr goes with triumph to the devouring flames. Acting against its still, small voice, the boldest become weak and irresolute.

“Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.”

Whatever your hearers may say about you, compel them to say in the honesty of their hearts, though their lips may declare the contrary, “That man is right.” However much you may differ on some points, there are great, fundamental, underlying truths concerning which you agree. Start here. Into whatever river or rivulet you may guide them, map it out so clearly that they can see that it is connected with the great ocean of truth. Every demonstration in geometry begins with an axiom, or with a proposition that has been already proved. This is the natural order. But if, the first thing, you attack the prejudices of the people, you place them at once upon the defensive ; and they will either leave you, or set themselves to parry your blows. It will be but poor consolation in your defeat to say, “They will not bear the truth.” That is where you show your want of skill. Does the doctor give up his patient to die, because he cannot bear bread and meat ? Does the mother leave her babe to starve, because it rejects the richest, purest milk ? So, if the people

whom you address cannot bear the plainest truths of the gospel, there are religious truths which they do believe. Find out what these are, and show them their wickedness in not living up to them. Once get the slumbering conscience awakened, and it will be comparatively easy to lead one into all truth. The Apostle says: "For we write none other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge ; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even unto the end."—2 Cor. i, 13. This was addressed to Christians. But he showed the same good sense in preaching to sinners. To the idolatrous Athenians he said: "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."—Acts xvii, 22, 23. The term translated "too superstitious," is, in the original, a complimentary rather than an offensive one. It means "too religious." He does not appear to attack their superstitions, but preaches to them the God of heaven as their "unknown god." We have seen many Roman Catholics, and some Jews converted; but they were converted like ordinary sinners, and not by being convinced of the errors of the religious systems in which they had been trained. When they received the Spirit they renounced their errors.

Do not mistake me. I would not have you compromise. I would not have you keep back any of God's saving truths. But the carpenter

does not compromise, when he puts the sharp end of the nail into the resisting wood. If you try to drive the nail, head first, do not complain of the wood, even if you hurt your own fingers. Take truths which the people receive and fasten them in the conscience. They will open the way for other truths. "Divine truth," says Andrew Fuller, 'is like chain shot; get one link into the soul and it draws all the others after it.' As Baxter says, "Men must be brought into a state of grace before we can expect of them the works of grace."

The feelings may be deeply moved by pathetic appeals; but unless the conscience is also reached, no permanent good will be effected. A minister preached on the death and sufferings of Christ. He was a man of lively fancy, and deep sensibility, and he painted so vividly the sufferings of Christ, that the people could almost see him, on the cross before their eyes. The preacher felt deeply, and wept from the intensity of his emotion. The people wept in sympathy with him. As he was passing out of the church, a gay young lady, her eyes swimming in tears, took him by the hand and said, "Oh, I never was more delighted in my life! *not even in a theatre.*" He had been preaching to her imagination, but she preached to his conscience. An actor in the pulpit may move the people as an actor does upon the stage. He may fill the house with his admirers; but he only takes them with him down to hell. The tendency of every sermon should be to make people hate their own sins, and turn from them.

Preaching should quicken the conscience by frequent warnings of the terrible consequences of a life of sin. When Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled."—Acts xxiv, 25. It was doubtless the fear of the last that made him tremble for want of the former. The Apostle assures us that this was the way he preached Christ. "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom."—Col. i, 28. But warning is mockery unless there is danger. If every man should be warned, then is every man in peril. If there is something to fear, then should we be plainly instructed what it is, and why it is to be feared, that the threatened evils may be averted.

It was to the most notable professors of godliness of his day that John the Baptist cried, "O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"—Mat. iii, 7. They based their confidence on the ground that they were the children of Abraham—that is, members of the true church—just as so many do at the present day—but he assured them that this would not save them. "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."—Mat. iii, 10. How full of warning are these words! Predicting the work of Christ, John said, in the same strain: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable

fire.”—Mat. iii, 12. There was something in such preaching to alarm the conscience; and, professors of religion though they were, they flocked to his baptism.

Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount opens with blessings; but it abounds with warnings. The blessings are not pronounced upon his followers as such, but upon those who possess the characters described. He warns us that slight causes, as men esteem them, will shut us out of Heaven; and, with the utmost fidelity, he tells us of the great pains we ought to take to keep out of hell. “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”—Mat. v, 29.

Are men in less danger now than they were then? We are too apt to forget, that it was to his own disciples that our Lord’s sermon was preached. It was in the ears of his beloved followers that these fearful warnings were uttered. They were his chosen ones, yet they might not fall into sin, lest they fall into hell.

Is it because the Christians of the present day are so free from temptation, that words of solemn warning are so seldom heard from the pulpit? Are the instances of those who yield to the solicitations of unhallowed, carnal pleasures so rare that nothing need be said of the eternal ruin that is sure to follow? Is it for the reason that members of the Christian Church are never guilty of dishonesty, never betray the trust that is reposed in

them, that we seldom hear anything said in the pulpit of the necessity of "cutting off the right hand," if in no other way the love of gain can be kept from leading into sin? Would that it were so! But facts of almost daily occurrence tell a different story. If more faithful warnings were given, there would be less occasion for them. The fear of giving offence, or of receiving less salary, keeps lips closed that otherwise would call attention to the imminent danger to which many fair professors of religion are exposed. It is because too many of us ministers are cowardly and time-serving, that the consciences of the people are lulled to sleep, and many rush on, talking confidently of going to Heaven, while living after the flesh, though the Bible says plainly that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—Gal. v, 21.

The great want of the church to-day, is God-fearing, conscientious members. But these will be still more rare unless there is a reform in the preaching. The moral sense in men must be awakened so that it becomes painfully sensitive to the least deviation from right. The minister must set the example, and be able to say with Paul: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."—2 Cor. i, 12.

✱ If you would have your preaching do the most good, you must be affectionate and earnest in your

manner. There should be no appearance of scolding. The sharpest reproofs should be given in a kind spirit. Dr. Redfield used often to say, "Never take the sword into your own hands." Let the people see that the controversy is not between you and them ; but between them and God. Never "take up a reproach against your neighbor," and talk about that in public, under the pretence of being faithful. Let your tones of voice, as well as your words, be those of one who feels kindly towards all. When you are tempted to say anything harsh, not only resist the temptation, but use just as affectionate language as propriety will permit. Not pounding, but sunbeams soften the frozen ground to receive the plow.

From the very commencement of the service act like one who is thoroughly in earnest. Do not get up in the pulpit in an indifferent, careless way, as though you have an unpleasant task to perform, and your chief study is to get through it with the smallest possible expenditure of strength. Spare not yourself. Throw your whole soul into the work. If you want your hearers to be aroused to earnestness you must be in earnest. Fire is kindled by fire. He who appears indifferent cannot excite enthusiasm in others. If the people go to sleep under your appeals, it is because you yourself are not awake. Can you expect others to be interested in what you are saying, when you are not sufficiently interested to speak with a voice loud enough to be distinctly heard by even the small congregation who come to hear you ?

But a loud voice and constant action do not necessarily carry the impression of earnestness. Earnestness may be assumed. Where it is, it will have the appearance of being put on. The best way to have the appearance of earnestness, is to be earnest and sincere. If you feel deeply, you will make others feel. If you, from habit, or from art, acquire an earnest manner, when you are not in earnest, it will, however it may attract attention at first, soon lose its power. In your lowest tones, there should be a fervor that nothing but the Holy Spirit can inspire. This, though unaccompanied by the graces that scholastic training can give, will cut its way to the heart, when all the studied words of oratory fall unheeded upon admiring ears.

X The daily walk, the conversation, the dress—every thing about a minister of the Gospel should show that he is in earnest to get to Heaven himself and to get as many others as possible to go with him.)

“ Yet, had his aspect nothing of severe,
But such a face as promised him sincere;
Nothing reserved or sullen was to see,
But sweet regard and pleasing sanctity;
Mild was his accent, and his action free.
With eloquence innate his tongue was armed;
Though harsh the precept, yet the people charmed.
For letting down his golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the sky.”

Spurgeon says: “There is preaching, and what is it? ‘O Lord, help thy servant to preach, and teach him by thy Spirit what to say.’ Then out comes the manuscript and they read it. A pure

insult to Almighty God! We have preaching, but it is of this order. It is not preaching. It is speaking very beautifully and very finely, possibly eloquently, in some sense of the word; but where is the right down preaching such as Whitefield's? Have you ever read one of his sermons? you will not think him eloquent, you cannot think him so. His expressions were rough, frequently coarse and unconnected; there was very much declamation about him: it was a great part of his speech. But where lay his eloquence? Not in the words you read, but in the tone in which he delivered them; and in the tears that ran down his cheeks, and in the pouring out of his soul. The reason why he was eloquent was just what the word means. He was eloquent because he spoke right on from his heart—from the innermost depths of the man. You could see when he spoke that he meant what he said. He did not speak as a trader, or as a mere machine, but he preached what he felt to be the truth, and what he could not help preaching. When you heard him preach, you could not help feeling that he was a man who would die if he could not preach, and with all his might call to men and say, 'Come! come! come to Jesus Christ and believe on him.' Now, that is just the lack of these times. Where, where is the earnestness now? It is neither in pulpit, nor yet in pew, in such a measure as we desire it; and it is a sad, sad age, when earnestness is scoffed at, and when the very zeal which ought to be the prominent characteristic of the pulpit is regarded as enthusiasm and fanati-

cism. I ask God to make us all such fanatics as most men laugh at—to make us all just such enthusiasts as many despise. We reckon it the greatest fanaticism in the world to go to hell, the greatest enthusiasm upon earth to love sin better than righteousness; and we think those neither fanatics nor enthusiasts who seek to obey God rather than men, and follow Christ in all his ways. We repeat, that one sad proof that the church needs a revival, is the absence of that death-like, solemn earnestness which was once seen in the Christian pulpit.”

Preaching should be persuasive. If you cannot persuade men to renounce sin and serve God, much less can you drive them to it. Paul says, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.”—2 Cor. v, 11. Persuade men—not drive them, nor attempt to drive them. How often does he use such words as *entreat*, *beseech*! We must cultivate this spirit, and style of address. It will never do to get tried with people, because they do not get saved as readily and as fully as they should. Because men will not submit themselves to God, that is no reason why we should indulge in hardness or coldness towards them. We should give them invitation upon invitation, line upon line, precept upon precept.

✧ The preacher should keep himself out of sight. Egotism, offensive everywhere, is a thousand fold more so in the pulpit. But it is not egotism to tell humbly and confidently what God has done for your soul, in order to draw others to him for the same gracious work. Make no efforts at dis-

day. If you have learning, use it to so simplify your language that all may understand you. If you have talents, use them to make the cross of Christ more plainly visible to your hearers. A literary gentleman went from the city to seek diversion, by fishing among the streams of Scotland. He had a patent pole, and a complete outfit of the most approved, expensive kind. After spending hours in fishing without even a bite, though he could see that fish were plenty, he came across a country boy, with a switch for a pole, a piece of twine for a cord, and a bent pin for a hook; but he had a long string of fish. The gentleman asked the boy why he could catch none. The boy, who had been watching him, replied:

“Ye maun keep yersel’ oot o’ sight.”

That is the secret of fishing for men as well as for trout. We repeat with emphasis: you must keep yourself out of sight. Hold up the cross. Preach the word. Show the people Christ. Send them away talking about him instead of praising you.

Do not preach too long. No matter how much piety you have, and how sound your doctrines may be, you will weary the people out with long sermons. Paul, in one place in which he could stay but a short time, wishing to indoctrinate the disciples as well as he could, continued his speech the last night he was with them until midnight. But even this long sermon was attended with fatal consequences. “And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen

into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sank down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft and was taken up dead."—Acts xx, 9. Since then there have been many killed, spiritually, with "long preaching." Paul raised the young man to life; but these "long preachers" generally leave the people dead.

It is not necessary to put the whole body of divinity, beginning with the fall and ending with the resurrection, into a single sermon. The people may hear you again. If not, they may hear others just as capable of giving instruction. As a rule, long sermons defeat the object of a sermon, which is to lead souls nearer to God. They leave a sense of weariness instead of encouragement. Half of a sermon often destroys the good which the other half might do. A plank that will bear the ship-wrecked sailor, will, when its weight becomes doubled, if he clings to it, carry him to the bottom. A gun overloaded, injures him who fires it. When you can no longer keep the attention of your audience, stop. Or if you see that souls are so awakened as to be likely to commit themselves to seek the Lord—or to seek full salvation, break off at once, and get them to act. When the net is full of fishes, whether the circuit proposed is gone over or not, draw it to land. Better spoil a hundred sermons than lose a soul.

CHAPTER X.

LOVE.

“He will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks.”—Amos iv, 2.

To catch fish with a hook, one must be good natured. At the slightest manifestation of impatience, the fish are gone. The hook must, at least, appear to be baited. Fish are not very high in the scale of being, but they do not knowingly catch at the naked hook.

Among the most ignorant, there is a good deal of discernment. A child, surrounded by strangers, chooses, by instinct, for a friend, one that loves children. We care for those who care for us. If you would benefit the people, you must have a sincere love for their souls. “I seek not yours, but you.”—2 Cor. xii, 14. We must, in all our conduct, let the people see that it is not their money, nor their praise that we desire, but the salvation of their souls. This must be apparent in all our actions. It should be manifest that our aim is to do them good. Our sharpest rebukes should be administered in the tenderest love. “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.”—1 Tim. v, 1, 2. People of common sense, even though destitute of grace, will generally receive

reproof administered in this manner, by one who loves them, as they have every reason to believe. The hardest iron, when properly heated, can be easily shaped by the hammer. Let the warm breath of affection go before your blows. Be ready to make any sacrifice that the spiritual welfare of your people demands. Never let your own ease, or your own pleasure keep you from the performance of any duty which you owe to them, or from rendering any service that is likely to be profitable to their souls.

It is hardly possible that his ministry can be a failure, who can say to his people, as the Apostle said to those among whom he labored, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."—1 Thess. ii, 10–12. This love will save you from every thing rough, or harsh, or overbearing. It will make you patient of the faults of those under your care, and persevering in your efforts to correct them. "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."—1 Thess. ii, 7–8. He who is thus careful of his charge will soon see the weak and sickly grow well and strong; and the strong

will be full of courage, ready for any undertaking to extend the kingdom of God, to which he may lead them.

If any get out of the way, you will not give them up, and call them names, and say they amount to nothing, but you will feel that they have a soul to save, and will go after them, and with the most earnest entreaties seek to bring them back to Christ. Bunyan says, "If any of those who were awakened by my ministry did after that fall back, (as sometimes too many did) I can truly say, their loss hath been more to me, than if my own children, begotten of my own body, had been going to their graves. I think verily I may speak it without any offence to the Lord, nothing has gone so near me as that ; unless it was the fear of the loss of the salvation of my own soul. I have counted as if I had goodly buildings and lordships in those places where my children were born ; my heart hath been so wrapped up in the glory of this excellent work, that I counted myself more blessed and honored of God by this, than if he had made me emperor of the Christian world, or the lord of all the glory of the earth without it."

If you have this love for your people, it will impel you to faithful dealing with their souls. In order to benefit them, you will be ready, if need be, to lose their good-will for the time being. Such sacrifices, men of God are often called to make. But deceivers, who for their own profit, pretend to great love, will be very careful not to say any thing, however much it is needed, which is calculated to

give offence. As Cecil says: "The love of some men is all milk and mildness. There is so much delicacy, and so much fastidiousness! They touch with such tenderness,—and if the patient shrinks, they will touch no more! The times are too flagrant for such a disposition. The Gospel is sometimes preached in this way till all the people agree with the preacher. He gives no offence, and he does no good. But St. Paul united and blended love and zeal. He must win souls; but he will labor to do this by all possible, lawful contrivances. 'I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' Zeal, alone, might degenerate into ferociousness and brutality; and love, alone, into fastidiousness and delicacy; but the Apostle combined both qualities in a happy medium."

X Love does not consist in a blind belief that all who profess to be Christians are such in reality. We cannot believe this, and believe the Bible. Yet this is the popular idea. Let a minister, filled with the Spirit of Christ, with the utmost tenderness, warn professors who do not bring forth the fruits of the Spirit that *they* are in the way to hell, and it goes out that he is wanting in charity. Such a hue and cry will be raised, that few even of those who believe what he says, will dare to stand by him. Yet can we have love for a person and not warn him of a terrible danger to which we know he is exposed? Suppose you saw one simply taking a wrong road; would love prompt you to tell him that he is going in the right direction? If you should see a friend in the first stages

of the cholera, would you, out of love, encourage him to think that nothing serious is the matter, until it is too late for remedies? O! that is not love which allows those under our influence to go on deceived, feeling confident of their salvation, when, as God is true, they are in "the broad road that leadeth to destruction." Love would prompt to the most energetic efforts to open their eyes before their race is run, and to turn their feet into the narrow way that leadeth unto life.

But if love inspires us when we tell men of the awful danger that awaits them unless they repent, every thing will be done in a spirit of true compassion; there will be nothing that looks as if we should be glad to see the sentence against them executed. There will be nothing that savors of self-complacency or exultation. Said a minister to McCheyne, "I preached yesterday on eternal punishment." "I trust," replied the man of God, "that you were able to do it with great tenderness."

Love will give us power over turbulent spirits.

The first camp-meeting we held in Illinois was near the city of Aurora. At the opening, some of the friends wanted a police force organized to maintain order. We told them if they would not appoint a police until we requested it, we would be responsible for the order. They assented. We went to the woods and pleaded with the Lord for a baptism of love for rowdies. We felt that the prayer was answered. It was a wonderful meeting. One time as they were singing the doxology again

and again at the close of a service, many fell prostrate under the power of God. There was no occasion for a police, and every night the crowd left the ground as quietly as if they had been to a church.

The Rev. G. H. Humphrey, when he was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in South Pittsburg, visited every saloon in that part of the city, and talked freely with the proprietors, about the character of their business, the great injury it was doing to others, and the eternal peril to which it exposed themselves. He personally invited them to come to church to hear a sermon which he was about to preach to saloon-keepers. The sermon was a faithful one, but he had shown such an interest in their welfare that they all received it kindly.

Not that men cannot resist those who have the purest love. Christ was love incarnate, and yet the people clamored for his blood.

However disinterested may be his motives and his conduct, he who labors for the good of others with the expectation of receiving a grateful appreciation of his toil and sacrifices, will be sorely disappointed. Where he deserved thanks he will sometimes receive censure. But love will give you patience to endure all, without complaining, and will enable you to persevere to the end. It "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."—1 Cor. xiii, 7.

Unless you have an unusual measure of this grace, you will get tired of being misrepresented

and persecuted, frequently by those for whom you have done the most; and you will give up in despair. But, inspired by love divine, you can say "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."—2 Cor. xii, 15. If you expect no return from those whom you serve for Christ's sake, you will not be disappointed when none is given.

Perhaps no man ever made greater sacrifices for others than did Moses. He was the adopted son of the daughter of one of the mightiest kings of earth. Thermuthis, the princess who had adopted him, was heir to the throne, and she educated Moses to succeed her father. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."—Acts vii, 22. Josephus says that when Moses was grown up, he was made general of the army of the Egyptians, which he led to successful battle against the Ethiopians; who, before Moses was made general, had repeatedly defeated the armies of Egypt and threatened to overrun the whole country. Yet such was his faith in God, and his love for his people, that to lead them to freedom he resigned all these honors. Did they whom he came to serve receive him? At his first effort for their deliverance he was betrayed, and compelled to flee for his life, and he dwelt forty years in obscurity. At last he brought them out of their grievous bondage; but at the slightest difficulty they turned against him, and murmured and complained. The

thanks he received were expressed in language like this: "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."—Ex. xiv, 11, 12. How did Moses endure such treatment? Just as every minister of the Gospel who loves the souls of the people will, with calmness, and with unabated efforts for their salvation. Yet even when the forbearance of a long-suffering God seemed exhausted, Moses threw himself in the breach and cried to the Lord, "O, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin, and if not, blot me I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written."—Ex. xxxii, 31, 32. The patience of Job is proverbial: but we think that the patience of Moses was greater.

If you undertake to lead a colony to heaven, you will have trials similar to those that Moses had. It will seem to you sometimes that about all the good you do is to be a scape-goat, to bear the blame for the faults of others. This is a part of the service to which you are engaged. It is just as necessary as any other part. You must bear it patiently, and not condemn yourself unless God condemns you. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suf.

fering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called."—1 Pet. ii, 19, 21. This is a part of your heritage, just as precious, when endured properly, as any other part. When these trials come, do not be restive and try to run. Hold still. In the hottest fire say with the poet:

Pain's furnace heat within me quivers,
 God's breath upon the flame doth blow,
 And all my heart in anguish shivers,
 And trembles at the fiery glow;
 And yet I whisper, As God will !
 And in his hottest fire hold still.

He comes and lays my heart all heated,
 On the hard anvil, minded so,
 Into his own fair shape to beat it,
 With his great hammer, blow on blow;
 And yet I whisper, As God will !
 And at his heaviest blows hold still.

He takes my softened heart and beats it,
 The sparks fly off at every blow,
 He turns it o'er and o'er and heats it,
 And lets it cool, and makes it glow;
 And yet I whisper, As God will !
 And in his mighty hand hold still.

X It will be impossible for you to meet with success without exciting in others a spirit of envy. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."—Num. xii, 3. But even his own brother and sister spoke against him. Never did man use his authority with greater modesty, nor with less display.

But "two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown," conspired against him. Num. xvi, 2. You will have every thing to contend with, but if you keep yourself in the love of God, he will take you through.

Though you love the people, it does not follow that you must fellowship them as Christians because they belong to the church. Many appear to think that Christian love and fellowship necessarily go together. This is often assumed as though it were a self-evident truth. Some who profess a large amount of charity will not hesitate to pronounce you uncharitable,—that is, deficient in love; if you do not receive heartily to your fellowship all who are in good standing in evangelical churches. This charge proceeds upon the assumption that a lack of fellowship is a lack of love. This assumption is false and dangerous.

Christian love and fellowship do not necessarily go together. Love depends upon our own religious condition. Fellowship takes into account the condition of another. We can have love for another,—a real desire to promote his welfare—whatever may be his state. But we cannot, in our hearts, have Christian fellowship for one who, as we believe, gives us good reason to think he is not a Christian. Our Saviour says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."—Mat. vii, 16. Paul says, "He that is spiritual judgeth"—that is, in the original, discerneth,—"all things."—1 Cor. ii, 15. It is difficult to impose upon him. If, when a person is evidently wanting in essential elements of the

Christian character, if, when he is living in plain violation of plain commands of God, we still, through fear of reproach, or through an unwillingness to lose his friendship, or incur his displeasure, give him our fellowship, and act as though we think he is in the way to heaven, we deceive ourselves as well as him, if we think we are actuated by love. It is selfishness, and not love. An avowed enemy cannot do him the harm we are doing. We are aiding him in a self-deception which is likely to prove fatal to his eternal interests. Love would prompt us under such circumstances, not only to withhold fellowship, but to give a faithful warning. The true servants of God do not fail to take this course with those who serve the Lord only in name. On this account they are said to have a bad spirit, to be censorious and fault-finding. In every age, Ahab, who lives in splendor, keeps up the form of religion, is liberal in his views, and tolerant in his practice, says to Elijah, who will not compromise to please the king, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* Paul had the greatest love for his brethren, members of the church which God had established, and which he had honored with a long succession of prophets and holy men, but after his conversion he had no fellowship with them. We are to emulate his example. The command is explicit: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."—Eph. v, 11. Darkness always asks to be recognized as light. Error is very friendly if it is permitted to pass, unchallenged, for truth.

The bad are willing to give to the good their patronage and support if they can have their fellowship in return. But the command is imperative. Duty is plain. There is no communion between light and darkness. Still more especially is this the case when darkness guards itself by fearful oaths and imprecations. If it comes to the light merely for recognition and support, we are to let it alone. So, however much love we may have for God, and for our neighbor, we must not fellowship darkness. Nor is our duty in this respect affected by the number who choose darkness rather than light. We must stand true to God, if we stand alone. Truth suffers from this yielding spirit of her votaries. If those who have the light would walk as children of the light, the light would spread.

There is no sacrifice that we cannot joyously make if we are filled with the love of Christ. No other motive from which men act is so strong, and so sustaining. The world must give way before those who, from the heart can say, "The love of Christ constraineth us."—2 Cor. v, 14. However often defeated, they will triumph in the end. The love of Christ can prompt one to go and preach the Gospel without a salary, without a church to stand by him, in the face of persecution and death. It did Paul. And he did not look forward to an easier time while he lived. As soon as he raised up a society that loved him, he left them, to carry the Gospel to another place. Where can you find an expression of greater devotion than in his parting words to the church at Ephesus: "And

now behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.”—Acts xx, 22–24.

There are those to-day who have the same spirit of devotion. If called to the ministry, they cannot, by any church or state authority be awed into preaching the Gospel of expediency, nor can they be starved into silence. The dictates of worldly prudence are overpowered by an all-conquering love for Christ.

These are the faithful followers of Christ. They “count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord.”—Phil. iii, 8. They are often the objects of scorn and reproach,—often of persecution and injustice. To them it can be said, “Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.”—Heb. x, 34. To such as these, no other appeal for money or service is needed but that the cause of Christianity requires it. Whatever requirement the *Master* makes, they are ready to meet it.

In A. D., 1660, John Bunyan was sent to Bedford jail for preaching the Gospel. He was poor. He had a wife and a family of four small children

to whom he was tenderly attached. He lay there in a loathsome jail twelve years, for the sake of Christ. To the offer of freedom on condition that he would not preach, he made this noble reply :

“I am resolved to lie here till the moss doth grow upon my eye-brows, before I will consent not to preach the glorious Gospel of my blessed Saviour.”

This is the affection that should animate every one who labors for souls. Then he will not be daunted by any difficulties or dangers. He who can die for Christ, can work for him in any sphere, however humble ; on any pittance, however small. Said one who from a noble family went to preach the Gospel to the heathen, who depended for his living solely upon what the people among whom he labored chose to give him, “I have nothing to add but that they who came forth to labor for the salvation of idolaters, receive from on high such consolations, that if there be on earth such a thing as happiness, it is theirs.”

CHAPTER XI.

FAITH.

"And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes."—Luke v, 6.

The battle of Winchester, in our civil war, was stoutly contested. The Union forces were composed of tried veterans, led by brave officers, but after hours of hard fighting they gave way. Their general, not expecting a battle so soon, was twenty miles distant. The roar of cannon told him of the conflict. He put spurs to his noble horse, and in little over an hour, covered with dust, his black charger white with foam, he met his retreating troops. Waving his sword, and shouting the battle cry, he renewed the conflict; and the vanquished gained a decisive victory. He brought no reinforcements but himself; he did not, like Hector or Achilles of old, leave piles of his enemies slain wherever he went; the same men did the fighting that fought before, but their confidence in their general turned defeat to victory.

✓ In every department of life he who works with resolution works in hope. This is especially true in the cause of Christ. The enemies are visible. They are near at hand. They loom up in the distance. They are entrenched in fortifications constructed with the most consummate skill, and strengthened by unceasing labor. They lie in wait in

ambuscades, under coverts that seemed to promise shelter from the heat, and safety from the conflict.

He who goes to warfare against sin must not reckon upon having a holiday parade. Inch by inch the ground will be contested; victories won will have to be defended with a vigilance that never wearies—the battle which you have gained by such hard fighting will be renewed against you when you are least expecting it; every artifice known to honorable or dishonorable warfare will be employed to secure your final defeat; and unless you are certain of the righteousness of your cause and have unbounded confidence in the Captain of your salvation you will ingloriously surrender.

True faith never knows defeat. It triumphs in every seeming overthrow; overpowered, it conquers, killed, it comes to life; buried, it rises again. Its ideas of triumph are very different from those of the world. It sees occasion to exult in what a worldly religion would call a failure. What would be thought of a man at the present day who, running such a career as did St. Paul, yet claimed in every battle to be victorious? He might consider himself fortunate if he escaped being shut up as insane. At Damascus the Jews laid in wait to kill Paul, at Antioch the chief men of the city expelled him from their coasts; at Lystra where, after seeing the miracle which he did, the people called him a god and prepared to offer sacrifices to him, but after hearing him preach they stoned him and left him for dead; at Philippi he was publicly whipped,

thrust into the inner prison, and put in the stocks ; at Thessalonica he was assaulted, and sent away by night ; at Corinth he was beaten before the judgment seat ; at Ephesus the whole city was thrown into a tumult on his account ; at Jerusalem he was beaten, bound with thongs, and barely escaped with his life. But read his summary of his experience.

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”—2 Cor. xi, 24–27.

Would such a life now be considered a success? Yet he exclaims, as if he had enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity ; “Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.”—2 Cor. ii, 14. Do not say that Paul was an inspired Apostle. It was through faith that he was sustained. We may have the faith. We must have it if we would work with Christ. Unbelief will paralyze all our energies. It will make us faint and weak.

X A lack of faith in us will also weaken those who labor with us. This is especially true with ministers. While Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed, when he let down his hand the enemy pre

vailed. A discouraged minister, however good he may otherwise be, will do harm. He will dishearten where he ought to encourage. You may tell the people to go on and not look to you; but this will never answer. The divine order is—"Whose faith follow."—Heb, xiii, 7. Many of the people will follow your faith whether you wish them to or not. So you need to be strong in faith, for their sakes as well as your own. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you."—Isa. xxxv, 3-4. But it will do no good to say this to others unless you believe it yourself. The promises of success to those who do the work of the Lord are most clear and abundant. If you cannot believe them you have no business to undertake the work. God does not want any of his children to work to no purpose. He who sees nothing accomplished as the result of his toils, becomes faint-hearted. But instead of yielding to discouragement he should ascertain the cause of his want of success, remove it, and give himself with renewed energy and zeal to the work. God can always—we say it with reverence—be depended upon to do the part that he has promised.

If you would successfully do God's work, you must not only be pardoned by faith and be sanctified by faith, but you must also live by faith. If you do not, you will die a spiritual death. "Man

shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”—Matt. iv, 4. You must believe God’s word. Rely upon it just as much when it promises temporal, as when it promises spiritual blessings. Let it be to you the word of God, who cannot lie. Examine carefully, and see to it that you sustain the character of those to whom His promises are made, and if you do, appropriate them to your use just as confidently as you would a roll of bank bills, or promises to pay, which you knew belonged to you. Material wealth owes its value largely to faith. When confidence is shaken, business houses go down. Gold has the ability to secure for us some material comforts, because it is believed to be the representative of wealth.

Among savages who have no confidence in it, it would be worthless. He who has the greatest faith in God is the richest man. In the greatest emergency—in the most overwhelming crisis, God can be relied upon. Having food and raiment let us be therewith content. God will take care of the future. Anxiety will not relieve us. All our planning and contriving cannot secure us from disasters and defeats; but God can take us through victorious. We must dismiss our fears and rely upon Him who says, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”—Heb. xiii, 5.

Thus faith is essential to our success, for it not only gives us courage but brings to our assistance the power of the Omnipotent God. It is to the

soul what attraction is to the earth—it keeps it moving in its orbit. It is the connecting link that unites us to the power that takes us along. It presents a draft upon the boundless resources of the Almighty which he never fails to honor.

When one is inspired by love, and by the hope of success, and, at the same time knows that the work which he does will have the most salutary effect upon his own interests, he puts forth the best exertions of which he is capable. A most disinterested man was Moses—but it is said of him, “He had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”—Heb xi, 26. This is spoken—not in condemnation—but with approval.

The long line of worthies who “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” desired “a better country, that is, an heavenly.” They were not disowned on that account, because their motives were not more disinterested; but their action is commended, “Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.”—Heb. xi, 16. You may have but little pay here—your salary may be small, your accommodations poor,—like your Master, you at times may not know where to lay your head; but faith in God will not let you stop to look at these things, “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.—Col. iii, 24.

Generally, too little account is taken of the rewards which Christ promises His servants. These

promises ought to have a tremendous force. The notion too generally prevails, that if we gain Heaven, all is gained. This is a mistake. We must not think there is no distinction among those who are finally saved. They are all happy. But there are degrees of happiness. The difference among the glorified is wide and lasting. Paul says, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." There are very brilliant stars; and there are stars which cannot be seen with the naked eye. Between the dimmest star, and the sun shining in his strength, there is an almost inconceivable difference. So great is the difference among the saved. This difference is based—not upon creeds—not upon their professions, nor alone upon their piety; **BUT UPON THEIR WORKS.** What a man believes, is important; his inward experiences are of the highest importance, *for they determine his actions.* They settle the question whether his works will enhance his happiness, or add to the horrors of his damnation.

Men are saved by faith. Faith in Christ secures a pardon for all past offences. But over and above gaining heaven, works are rewarded. Jesus says, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."—Rev. xxii, 12. Jesus rewards his disciples exactly in proportion to their work. The rewards which men bestow are regulated by the posi-

tion which one occupies. The private soldier, who marches with his heavy load over muddy roads, stands on guard at night, or sleeps on the ground, and exposes his life freely on the battle field,—if he comes out unscathed, is discharged and forgotten; while the general, who lives in luxury, rides his prancing steed, and in time of battle gives his orders from some place of safety, is raised to the highest positions. Honors, ovations and applause attend him everywhere; while the men who actually did the fighting which gives him his eminence, are starving in cellars and garrets.

But it is not so in the army of Jesus. ~~X~~Men are rewarded for what they do, and not for the offices which they may chance to fill; for their actual performances, and not their professions; not for gifts bestowed, but for the manner in which they improve their opportunities. ACCORDING AS HIS WORKS SHALL BE. Momentous words! If we would have our works rewarded, they must be done from a right motive. If done for self, they will end in self. “Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” It may do them good, but it does not benefit me. They who build a church to outvie some other denomination, can no more claim a reward of Jesus, than he who buys a horse to ride faster than his neighbor. Church stock will no more benefit a man in heaven, than bank stock; the title to a pew, than the title to a farm. The minister who preaches for a salary, has his reward. He has no more right

to look to Jesus for his pay, than has the lawyer or the doctor. The minister has a right to his living. This is promised. "God has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." Ministers must preach for Jesus, and not for congregations, if they want Jesus should pay them.

If we would have Jesus reward us, we must do **HIS WORK**. To every truly converted person he says, *Son, go work in my vineyard*. We must work on our knees, in fervent prayer. There is a great scarcity of this kind of work. But all can do it, and all are called to it. There are enough formal, pompous prayers; but let us pray in the Spirit.

We must be witnesses for Jesus—tell what we know of his power to save. We must exhort and reprove with all long-suffering and doctrine. Everywhere there is an opportunity to exert at least a personal influence for the salvation of men. Those who are in business, must do business for God: do such business only as He is pleased with, and *do it honestly*; and give of the proceeds all they can spare for doing good. Work for God can be done just as well on the farm or in the shop, as in the pulpit. The work of Jesus is to preach the Gospel to the poor—not to pamper the pride of the wealthy. His work is to save men *from their sins*, not to encourage them to rest secure in sin; to save from all sin, and not to heal slightly, crying *Peace, peace*, when there is no peace. *Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully*.—Jer. xlviii, 10.—that is, **superficially**.

The largest promises are made to those who win souls to Christ. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."—Dan. xii, 3. Of a thousand who labor to gain any object of worldly ambition, scarcely one fully succeeds. He enjoys the benefit of his success at most for but a few years. Victor Immanuel won his crown, but his weary head could bear its weight for but a brief season, and then was laid away to rest in the grave. The Merchant Prince amassed his fortune, built his marble palace, adorned it with every elegance that wealth could purchase, and then was carried away to the narrow house appointed for all living. But who can adequately conceive of the duration that is expressed in the short words, "for ever and ever?" Dynasties may change, powerful nations may go to decay, and weak ones may rise to prominence; the earth itself and all its works may be burned up, but he who, in the few years of his probation turned many to righteousness, shall shine on in undimmed splendor, a jewel in the diadem of his God.

These great promises were not given for no purpose. It was not intended, when they were left on record, that we should be unmindful of them. They are the proper objects of our faith, and should arouse us to the most untiring efforts.

If you have faith it will be tested. Daniel was a man greatly beloved of the Lord. His prayers were answered; he was most miraculously helped

on many occasions—yet his faith was sorely tried at times. Heavenly deliverance did not come at once. An arch-angel, who was sent to his assistance, said that “From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days; but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.”—Dan. x, 12-13. If Satan could thus withstand Daniel, and cause delay in the answer to his prayers, he can do it with us. He will interpose obstacles, and hinder where he cannot defeat. He will wear out your patience if possible. He succeeded thus with Job’s wife. Difficulties unforeseen will present themselves; but you must not let your faith waver because of them. Faith is designed to conquer difficulties. God can work just as well in the face of the most formidable obstacles as He can where nothing appears to be in the way. But hold on, and you will conquer.

“To patient faith the prize is sure.”

Faith in God looks for him to accomplish that which is beyond human power. If the end is to be reached by the direct interposition of God, then difficulties are not to be taken into account at all. There is no perceptible difference in the time required to send a message by telegraph one mile or a hundred. Nothing is hard for God. If you have the promise of His word that it shall be done, then never des-

pair ; nay, do not even doubt. God's promises may be slow in fulfillment, but they are sure. A farmer planted a large orchard of standard pears. They grew finely from year to year, but bore no fruit ; finally, becoming impatient, he cut the most of them down, leaving only a few. To his surprise and mortification, those which were left, were the very next year loaded down with the most delicious and valuable fruit. A little more patience would have secured him ample recompence for all his pains. So it is often with us. We become disheartened because the results which we anticipate do not at once appear. Our labor is lost for want of persevering faith. Hold on to the promise of God until you see its fulfillment, for God's word can never fail.

If you are wanting in faith, the deficiency is not a constitutional one, like the lack of talent, which at best can only be supplied in part—but it is one which springs from causes entirely within your reach, and which therefore you may remedy. It is natural for man to believe. The greatest unbelievers are often extremely credulous. Skeptics of years standing have become famous for their faith.

If unbelief were not a fault, Christ would never have reproved his disciples for it. “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”—Luke xxiv, 25. The trouble was not in the mental constitution, but in the heart. Others he commends for their faith ; of the centurion he said, “I have not found so great

faith, no, not in Israel."—Luke vii, 9. But that unbelief is voluntary is placed beyond a doubt, from the fact that Christ makes it the one damning sin. "He that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark xvi, 16. But it were an absurdity to admit that the faith needed to save us is voluntary; while the faith needed to make us useful is beyond our reach. Every believer should go on increasing in faith. "We are bound to thank God always, for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly."—2 Thess. i, 3. You will not find it difficult to believe if you meet the conditions.

Belief is confidence reposed upon the statements of others. When they are persons of veracity—are in circumstances to know the truth of what they say, and have no interest in making a false representation—we cannot avoid believing the affirmations they make. If your neighbor should state that your son was killed by a railroad accident; that he sat by his side when he died; you could not disbelieve his story, however much you might wish it were not true.

God will not lie. It requires no arguments to prove this. Every one who believes in his existence, believes in his veracity. But many of the instructions, verbal and written, given to seekers of justification and sanctification, imply that the great difficulty with these seekers is, that they do not believe in God. The real trouble in the way of their getting healed slightly, as they are likely to, under

those teachers who multiply converts so easily, is, they do believe God. A culprit arraigned before a court, was weeping bitterly. A by-stander, thinking to comfort him, said, "Do not feel so bad; the court will do you justice." The culprit replied, "*That is what I am afraid of.*" So with many who find it so hard to believe. *They do believe God will do just what He says.* They know His promises are conditional. You promise to pay a man for doing a piece of work. If he knows he has not done the work, he cannot, with any assurance, ask you for the pay. So when God says, *Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,*—2 Cor. vi, 17, how can one who is *unequally yoked together with unbelievers*, by strong oaths and affirmations, believe that God *does receive* him? To urge him to believe it, is to urge him to believe a lie. God does not receive him, and never will until he meets the conditions. What is required in such a case, is obedience to a plain command of God, and then there will be no difficulty in believing.

The Holy Ghost says, *Be not conformed to this world.* How can one who does conform to this world in that *outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel*, believe that, while he is doing this, *he is transformed by the renewing of his mind*? He is not himself conscious of any transformation having taken place, nor is there any apparent to others. No wonder you have hard work to make him profess

holiness. The light within him must become darkness—great darkness—before he can do it with any degree of confidence. When he has learned to substitute darkness for light,—the traditions or misinterpretations of men for the plain word of God,—then he can make the highest professions of grace, and become a teacher of the “short and easy way of faith.

Jesus says, “How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?”—John v. 44—This suggests the real difficulty in the way of believing. It is a want of consecration—of entire consecration to God. The very last thing, generally, that men give up, is their reputation. They hold on to that, even when property and talents are consecrated to God. Yet that must be so fully given up, that they not only will not seek honor of men, but will not receive it, even of their brethren, when voluntarily proffered.

John Wesley says :* “With regard to contempt, then, my first position, in defiance of worldly wisdom, is, every true Christian is contemned, wherever he lives, by those who are not so, and who know him to be such ; that is, in effect, by all with whom he converses ; since it is impossible for light not to shine. This position I prove, both from the example of our Lord, and from his express assertion.”

*Works, vol. III, page 125.

“My next position is this : Till he is thus despised, no man is in a state of salvation. And this is a plain consequence of the former ; for if all that are not of the world are therefore despised by those that are, then till a man is despised, he is of the world : that is, out of a state of salvation. Nor is it possible for all the trimmers between God and the world, to elude the consequence : unless they can prove that a man may be of the world, and yet be in a state of salvation. I must, therefore, with or without the consent of these, keep close to my Saviour’s judgment, and maintain that contempt is a part of the cross which every man bears who follows Him ; that it is the badge of discipleship—the stamp of his profession—the constant seal of his calling ; insomuch that though a man may be despised without being saved, yet he cannot be saved without being despised.”

How contrary this is to the doctrine now being taught by many, who style themselves the followers of John Wesley ! To secure honor of men, splendid churches must be erected, costly apparel worn, and every outburst of genuine religious emotion suppressed !

Multitudes fail of the grace of God by believing that they are accepted, when they are not. Their teachers cry ; “ *Peace, peace, when God has not spoken peace.*” They are healed slightly.

Much of the teaching, among people styled evangelical, is rank heresy—universalism in disguise. The people are told “that Christ died to save them,

and all that is necessary, for them to have the joys of salvation, is to believe it." The popular sentiment finds expression in the stanza so generally sung—

"Nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do:
Jesus died, and paid it all—
All the debt I owe."

That a hymn, so thoroughly unscriptural, can obtain so wide a popularity, is a just cause of alarm to every lover of God and man.

To repent and make restitution, is *doing something*; and *something* that is often extremely disagreeable; and yet it must be done, wherever there is occasion—and where is there not?—or we cannot truly and Scripturally believe.

Go to the bottom. Repent in the dust before God. Where you have wronged your fellow men in reputation or in property, make restitution as far as possible. Where you have taken a wrong position in relation to the work of God, frankly confess it; come out from all voluntary, intimate associations with the worldly. In short, honestly obey God, and you will be astonished to see how readily your difficulties in believing will disappear.

As long as you are conscious of disobeying God in any particular, it will be impossible for you to come to Him in confidence for His help. You know he cannot be deceived. You have an abiding impression that He looks through all disguises. There is no covering that His all-searching eye does not penetrate; there is no pretence, however

specious, that deceives Him for an instant. Every man's conscience tells him all this. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."—Ps. lxvi, 18. Simplicity and fervor in approaching the mercy seat are lost; and the prayers become rhetorical and formal.

Discouragement generally comes from ourselves and not from our surroundings. It cannot strike its roots into a heart that is sound.

Hope on, hope ever ! though to-day be dark,
The sweet sunburst may smile on thee to-morrow :
Tho' thou must toil 'mong cold and sordid men,
With none to echo back thy thought, or love thee.
Cheer up, poor heart ! thou dost not beat in vain,
For God is over all, and Heaven above thee—
Hope on, hope ever.

I know 'tis hard to bear the sneer and taunt—
With the heart's honest pride at midnight wrestle ;
To feel the killing canker-worm of want,
While rich rogues in their stolen luxury nestle ;
For I have felt it. Yet from Earth's cold Real
My soul looks out on coming things, and cheerful
The warm sunrise floods all the land Ideal,
And still it whispers to the worn and tearful,
Hope on, hope ever.

Do you ever read that St. Paul was discouraged? When falsely charged with crime, the case presented so bad an appearance that, as he says: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." Did he get tried with them for their lack of confidence, or their cowardice? He adds, "*I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil

work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom."—2 Tim. iv. 16, 18. Did you ever hear that John Wesley was discouraged? His brothers opposed him, his wife tormented him, churches were closed against him, many of his societies backslid on his hands, but in the face of all, he kept on calmly at his work until the end.

"And be not faithless but believing." Jno. 20, 27. Search in yourself for the cause of your want of faith and when it is found, remove it. That must be an important matter upon which one's usefulness in the cause of Christ depends. Through your want of faith many may go on in sin whom you might have been instrumental in saving. But most of all, your own salvation is put in peril by unbelief. As your hold on Christ is weakened, the seductive influence of the world steals over you, while your power and inclination to resist are gradually lessened, and before you are aware of it you may be drawn into the current of worldliness which will drown you at last in destruction and perdition.

CHAPTER XII.

FEELING.

"So that the fishes of the sea shall shake at my presence."—*Ezek. xxxviii, 20.*

No movement becomes great and permanent until it takes hold of the feelings of men. The intellect may be informed and the judgment convinced, and men remain passive and quiet; but let the emotions become aroused, and energetic action follows. Is it because the majority of our people do not know that the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage is a most damnable business that they throw around it the sanctions of law? Or is it rather because, having always been accustomed to it, they are indifferent? But let the people, as in the state of Maine, become aroused to its enormities, and it is outlawed with other great crimes against humanity. Is it because a majority of the people in our country are not convinced of the truth of Christianity that they are so indifferent to its claims? Ninety-nine out of every hundred are as well satisfied of the truth of the Bible, as they are of any other truths by which they are influenced. To bring them to act, they need to have their dormant consciences awakened and their sensibilities aroused.

Men ought to feel. God gives us sensibilities that we may feel. It is a false refinement, or a

criminal process, by which the sensibilities are so mastered that, under no circumstances, is any emotion manifested. It requires a long process of hardening, to bring persons into that fearful state described in the Scriptures as "being past feeling." If anything should stir our feelings to the lowest depths it is the Christian religion.

Every part of man's nature that can be moved by intelligent appeals—his judgment, his sense of duty, his fears, and his hopes, his affections, and sympathies, his love of happiness, and his dread of suffering, of exposure and of shame—each and all are appealed to in the strongest manner by the Gospel of Christ, to lead wandering men back to their allegiance to God. These appeals ought to arouse the most careless and melt the hardest hearted. But many not only resist the claims of God, and listen to his earnest appeals with indifference, if not with secret or open scorn, but cover with opprobrious epithets, those who act as if they believe the awful truths which God has so clearly revealed.

To gain Heaven, one must be most thoroughly in earnest. Our Saviour tells us that, "The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force."—Mat. xi, 12. Violence is the highest pitch of earnestness. But the "violent"—those who are habitually in earnest—take the kingdom "by force"—by the most strenuous exertions. We must then, if we would gain Heaven, put forth the most persevering efforts on our part and encourage others to do the same. We must, in

whatever department Christ calls us to labor, do our work, with fidelity ; and, with increasing intensity of purpose to please Him, press on until we reach our Heavenly home.

No matter with what alacrity the runner of a race begins, if he gives out before the terminus is reached, he does not win the prize. The blight that destroys the grain just before the golden eared harvest invites the reaper's sickle is no less detrimental than the early frost that nips the infant blade. The emigrant who, having safely passed the dangers of the deep, is carried on shore to die, fails of realizing his golden visions, no less than he who, just as he was going on board, expired in the fatherland. So he who serves God long and faithfully, but dies an apostate, misses Heaven just as surely as if he had lived a sinner all his days. "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done, shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."—Ezek. xviii, 24. Do not say that the self-righteous is meant; for the sooner he turns from his spurious righteousness the better. If he holds on to that he must sink to ruin.

Whoever is thus in earnest, will make religion the business of his life. As the plant absorbs from the air and earth and water, only what is essential to its growth, and allows the noxious ele-

ments to pass untouched, so you will lay every providential occurrence under contribution to minister to your growth in grace. Your feelings may fluctuate, but your outward life will present to the world a beautiful uniformity. You will do right at all times, and under all circumstances. In unswerving rectitude you will be like the old Roman of whom an enemy bore testimony, "That it would be easier to turn the sun from his course, than Fabricius from the path of honesty." You may be devoid of comfort, but instead of neglecting your closet, you will visit it the oftener. The smouldering embers of the family altar may be nearly extinct; but you will only put on the fuel the more carefully, and with the breath of prayer, blow them into a flame.

Your corruptions may struggle hard for the mastery, and, in fact, often prevail; but you will wrestle with them the more vigorously and call the more imploringly upon God for help, lest "these sons of Zeruiah prove too hard" for you. He is not in earnest to secure his salvation, who, upon an interruption of his enjoyments becomes careless and prayerless, and in time, immoral and wicked.

Many, as soon as they lose the power, think themselves fully justified in giving up the form of godliness. This is a great mistake. If a man faints, it is not the best way to recover him to cut off his head. If your fire goes out, you will not warm your room by petulantly throwing off the fuel and pouring on water. So, if your spiritual

affections become languid, use incessantly the means of grace. Give yourself no rest. Stir up yourself to take hold of God. "Strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die."

If you thus earnestly serve God, from deep-seated principle, he will not leave you long without enjoyment. There will soon be a supernatural element introduced into your religion. It will not be a bare morality, frigid and sparkling as an iceberg. Jesus says: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."—John xiv, 21.

Just here you will be exposed to danger in the opposite direction. You have complained of the want of feeling. You may now have so much that, unless you are careful, you will grieve the Holy Spirit, fall into darkness, and so your last state become worse than the first. God will let you see something of the magnitude of your eternal interests; and, as President Edwards says: "Eternal things are so great and of such vast concern, that there is great absurdity in men's being but lightly moved by them." Your heart will be stirred to its lowest depths. The world will pronounce it excitement. Formality will decide that you are excited. And the devil, seizing an auspicious moment, will whisper to you, in the kindest manner, "May this not be mere excitement?" You reason with him. He is a shrewd logician—has had the benefit of six thousand years experi-

ence, which he well knows how to use. Overcome by his sophistry, you admit that, perhaps, it was excitement.

It is permitted by the prevailing code of fashion, for persons to become excited, on all subjects except religion, without losing caste. The editor of a leading journal, in describing the effects produced in a political meeting by singing a political song, says: "The audience wrought itself up into a perfect furor, and as the last words of the concluding stanza died away in a volume of sound, which made the very building shake, the whole assemblage rose to their feet *en masse*, and joined in a burst of cheering, again and again renewed, amid waving of hats, handkerchiefs and frantic demonstrations of delight." This was regarded as entirely proper. Men may become "frantic" in politics, without causing alarm or condemnation. But religious excitement is pronounced unbecoming, in the highest degree. All unite in applying to it, the most opprobrious epithets. Vital godliness has thus far had to make its way in the world under this great disadvantage. The Apostles were called "babblers," "fools," and said to be "mad," "drunk," and "beside themselves." Luther was styled a heretic, and Wesley, Whitefield and their coadjutors, fanatics and enthusiasts. The same weapon is still successfully wielded by the enemy of all righteousness. Many, whom the Spirit of God is endeavoring to lead into the full liberty of the Gospel, and into a great field of usefulness, fail of making any considerable progress,

because they shrink from this cross. They anxiously inquire if it is not possible to follow the Lord fully, without such manifestations of emotion as bring upon them the reproach of the world. Some, bearing the Christian name, many standing in Christian pulpits, look upon such manifestations with suspicion. They do not appear to be as much afflicted with the indifference and worldliness exhibited by many of the professed disciples of Christ, as with the overpowering feeling seen, at times, in a few.

This is the great impediment to the work of God, at the present time. The opposition, well-meant it may be, by many in the church of Christ, to all uncommon manifestations of the Spirit's influence is, to-day, effecting more harm than the cavils of the skeptic and the sneers of the profane. Says President Finney, who was a man of piety and learning, whose labors for many years were highly blessed in promoting revivals of religion, both in this country and in England: "I have supposed, and do still suppose, that the great reason why revivals of religion have not been more deep, permanent and sin-subduing is, that the Spirit has been unable to proceed beyond a certain limit in his work, without meeting with a stern resistance on the part of multitudes of professors of religion and ministers. They seem, in their unbelief, to have prescribed certain limits within which revivals should be kept; formed certain notions of order, and endeavored to confine the Spirit, whenever he should step

over into what they suppose to be the regions of disorder. For myself, I am expecting, as soon as the church will consent to it, and the ministry are prepared to lead the way, much deeper, more permanent, and sin-subduing revivals of religion than the world has ever seen. This must be if the world is ever to be converted."

While the earnest Christian will uniformly walk with the Lord by faith, and thus preserve an entire consistency of conduct, yet the depth of his emotions will vary. A continuance of the overpowering emotions that he sometimes experiences, would unfit him for the duties of life, and exhaust his physical frame. Paul could never have preached the Gospel had he always been so transported as not to know whether he "was in the body or out of the body."

The greatness of the danger to which sinners are exposed, shows that it is proper for them, and for those who are laboring for their salvation to manifest, at times, the deepest emotion. They have wantonly violated the divine law, which is holy and just and good. They have rejected all the overtures of mercy. } God, who cannot lie, has said: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."—Mat. xxv, 46. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever, and ever; and they have no rest, day nor night!"—Rev. xiv, 11. I once saw a man who had stood high in the community, but who had violated the laws of his country, and was awaiting his sentence to the State's prison. Though a strong man, he sobbed aloud, and for

some minutes could not control himself so as to speak. No one who saw him could have pronounced his great grief extravagant. Shall then the sinner, whose crimes in the sight of God are of a far deeper dye, and who is exposed to a fate infinitely more dreadful, be thought to be unduly excited at the discovery of his guilt, though he should "roar by reason of the disquietness of his heart !"

■ An aged mother left the home of her youth and the graves of her kindred, and with fondest hopes, crossed the Atlantic, that she might seek her son, in this land of plenty. She found him in a prison ! I saw her as she reached her hand through the iron grating and grasped the hand of her loved, though erring child : and then she turned away and sank to the ground, with a grief too big for utterance. He must be an unfeeling wretch who could ridicule the deep anguish of her broken heart. ♡ Who then will say that the Christian mother is fanatical, who, seeing the child of her affections "condemned already," waiting only for the ministering spirits of the justice of the Almighty, to hurry him away to "outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," cries unto God, "with groanings that cannot be uttered," to stay the avenging sword, and send once more, to his obdurate heart, the convicting Spirit, to persuade him, if possible, to escape the damnation of hell ? ♡ There can be no doubt but that his danger is real, and hence no anxiety that she can feel is greater than the dreadfulness

of the exposure will warrant. But we prefer to let President Edwards speak on this point. He was as pious as he was learned. Dr. Chambers says of him :

“Looking to Edwards, we behold the most philosophical of all theologians, at the same time the humblest and holiest of men.” Robert Hall pronounces him “The greatest man of the world.” Through his labors many souls were brought to Christ. He is good authority on Christian experience. No one will hardly dare to charge this eminent Divine and College President with either being fanatical himself or encouraging fanaticism in others. Edwards says, “There is one particular kind of exercise and concern of mind, that many have been overpowered by, that has been especially stumbling to some; and that is, the deep concern and distress that they have been in for the souls of others. I am sorry that any put us to the trouble of doing that which seems so needless, as defending such a thing as this. It seems like mere trifling in so plain a case, to enter into a formal and particular debate, in order to determine whether there be anything in the greatness and importance of the case that will answer, and bear a proportion to the greatness of the concern that some have manifested. Men may be allowed, from no higher a principle, than common ingenuity and humanity, to be very deeply concerned, and greatly exercised in mind, at the seeing others in great danger, of no greater calamity than drowning or being burned up in a house on

fire. And if so, then doubtless it will be allowed to be remarkable if they saw them in danger of a calamity ten times greater, to be still much more concerned; and so much more still, if the calamity was still vastly greater. And why then should it be thought unreasonable, and looked upon with a very suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad cause, when persons are extremely concerned at seeing others in very great danger of suffering the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, to all eternity? And besides, it will doubtless be allowed that those that have very great degrees of the Spirit of God, that is, a spirit of love, may well be supposed to have vastly more of love and compassion to their fellow creatures, than those that are influenced only by common humanity. Why should it be thought strange that those that are full of the Spirit of Christ, should be proportionably, in their love to souls like to Christ; who had so strong a love to them, and concern for them, as to be willing to drink the dregs of the cup of God's fury for them; and at the same time that He offered up His blood for souls, offered up also, as their high priest, strong crying and tears, with an extreme agony, wherein the soul of Christ was, as it were, in travail for the souls of the elect; and therefore in saving them He is said to see of the travail of His soul. As such a spirit of love to, and concern for souls, was the spirit of Christ, so it is the spirit of the Church; and therefore the Church in desiring and seeking that Christ might be brought forth in

the world, and in the souls of men, is represented, Rev. xii, as "a woman crying, travailing in birth, pained to be delivered." The spirit of those that have been in distress for the souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not to have been different from that of the Apostle who travailed for souls, and was ready to wish himself accursed from Christ for others. And that of the psalmist.—Ps. cxix, 53, "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law." And v. 136, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes because they keep not Thy law." And that of the prophet Jeremiah—Jer. iv, 19, "My bowels! my bowels? I am pained at my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me! I cannot hold my peace! Because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war." And so, chap. xi, 1, and iii, 17, and xiv, 17, and Isa. xxii, 4. We read of Mordecai, when he saw his people in danger of being destroyed with a temporal destruction: "That he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry."—Esth. iv, 1. And why, then, should persons be thought to be distracted, when they cannot forbear crying out, at the consideration of the misery of those that are going to eternal destruction?"

"I have seen," says Finney, "a man of as much strength of intellect and muscle as any man in the community, fall down prostrate, absolutely overpowered by his unutterable desires for sinners. I know this is a stumbling-block for many; and it

always will be as long as there remain in the church so many blind and stupid professors of religion. But I cannot doubt that these things are the work of the Spirit of God. O that the whole church could be so filled with the Spirit as to travail in prayer, till a nation should be born in a day."

God does not give any one this travail for souls continually, because no one could live under it; but every earnest and true Christian has it at times, and he that is led by the Spirit will have as much of it as he can well endure. If you have never felt it, you cannot work successfully for souls. Nay, you have good reason to fear that you have never yet been converted to God, and have never had the Spirit of Christ. And the Apostle says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."—Rom. viii, 9.

The Spirit opens our eyes to the condition of sinners. In His light the threatenings with which the Bible abounds are clothed with terror. Have we, by any act of disobedience, brought ourselves within the range of the artillery of Sinai? Does the dark cloud of Divine vengeance hang over us? The consciousness of our condition can but be attended with the deepest anguish of Spirit. The soul thus exposed goes "mourning all the day long." The sweetest pleasures have lost their attractions.

Have we been rescued from our perilous condition by the strong arm of Him who is mighty to deliver? Do we see others, strangers, acquaintances, friends, relatives, in imminent danger of the same destruction which so recently threatened

us? Does the compassionate Spirit of Jesus dwell within us? Then, how natural, how unavoidable is it that we should manifest, when alive to the condition of sinners, the deepest emotion.

Did Christ o'er sinners weep,
And shall our cheeks be dry?
Let floods of penitential grief
Burst forth from every eye.

"In witnessing," says a celebrated English philosopher, "first the entreaties, and supplications, and tears, of a convicted, condemned, and repentant malefactor, prostrate at the feet of his sovereign; and then, the exuberance of his joy and gratitude in receiving pardon and life, no one would so absurdly misuse language as to call the intensity and fervor of the criminal's feelings enthusiastical; for however strong or even ungovernable these emotions may be, they are perfectly congruous with the occasion:—they spring from no illusion; but are fully justified by the momentous turn that has taken place in his affairs;—in the past hour he contemplated nothing but the horrors of an ignominious death, but now life and its delights are before him. It is true that all men, in the same circumstance, would not undergo the same intensity of emotion; but all, unless obdurate in wickedness, must experience feelings of the same quality. And thus, so long as the real circumstances under which every human being stands in the court of the Supreme Judge are clearly understood, and duly

* Natural History of Enthusiasm, page 46.

felt, ENTHUSIASM FINDS NO PLACE; all is real; nothing is illusory."

The beggar may become a millionaire, the slave a king, with obedient nations at his feet, but this improvement in his condition is infinitely less than that which the sinner realizes when he is made an heir to "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Julia was born of respectable parents, and carefully tended in her early years. Her mother was a prudent, pious woman, but she died when Julia was but twelve years of age. The father, soon after, took to drinking and gambling, and spent all the property he possessed. His daughter was brought into the midst of profligate associates, and became vicious and abandoned. In a fit of intoxication she married a worthless, dissipated fellow. When she was eighteen years old she was tried for perjury, convicted and sentenced to the Sing Sing prison for fourteen years. She was naturally intelligent, active and energetic, and the limitations of a prison had a worse effect upon her than they would have had upon a more stolid temperament. In course of a year or two her mind began to sink under the pressure, and finally exhibited signs of melancholy insanity. Friend Hopper had an interview with her at Sing Sing, and found her in a state of deep dejection. She afterwards became completely deranged, and was removed to the lunatic asylum at Bloomingdale. He and his wife visited her there, and found her in a state of temporary rationality. They took her in a walk

with them through the grounds; and she enjoyed this little excursion very highly. But when one of the company remarked that it was a very pleasant place, she sighed deeply, and replied:

“Yes, it is a pleasant place to those who can leave it. But chains are chains, though they are made of gold; and mine grow heavier every day.”

Her temperament peculiarly required freedom, and chafed and fretted under restraint. Friend Hopper obtained permission for her to spend a day and night at his house in the city. The visit was found to be beneficial, and after a short interval was renewed. She spent several days in his family, and conducted with the greatest propriety. He soon after applied to the Governor for a pardon, which was promptly granted. He next provided a suitable home for her. When all was arranged, Friend Hopper went out to the Asylum to carry the news. Fearful of exciting her too much, he asked if she would like to go into the city again to spend a fortnight with his family.

“Indeed,” she replied, “I would.”

He promised to take her, and added:

“Perhaps thou wilt stay longer than two weeks.” At last he said, “It may be that thou wilt not have to return here again.”

She sprung up instantly, and looking in his face with intense anxiety, exclaimed:

“Am I pardoned? *Am I pardoned?*”

“Yes, thou art pardoned,” he replied; “and I am come to take thee home.”

She fell back into her seat, covered her face

with her hands, and wept aloud. Friend Hopper says, "This was the most affecting scene I ever witnessed." Obdurate, indeed, must be the heart of that man who could ridicule the deep emotion of this child of sorrow in this glad hour.

But as great as is the difference between an eternity in perdition, and fourteen years in prison, so much greater occasion of rejoicing is there in the case of every sinner when God says to him by the Holy Spirit, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." We do not read that any of those events, which are admitted to justify tumultuous demonstrations of delight among men are noticed above; but our Saviour has said that, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." — Luke xv. 10.

He, then, that can witness with indifference, and coolly criticise a scene that sends thrills of joy through all the ranks of the angelic hosts, has good reason to conclude that the veil is yet upon his heart,—that he has no just or proper sense of the **magnitude of eternal things.**

Well may Isaac Taylor say, "When those whose temper is abhorrent to religious services animadvert sarcastically upon the follies, real or supposed, of religionists, there is a sad inconsistency in such criticisms, like that which is seen when the insane make ghastly mirth of the manners, or personal defects of their friends and keepers."

The application of the argument is easily made. Events that affect greatly our temporal welfare justify a manifestation of the deepest emotion. But

our temporal interests bear no comparison to our eternal interests.

Therefore the service of God, affecting, as it does, our eternal interests, and those of our fellow men, renders a manifestation of the deepest emotion entirely proper.

We next adduce a few of the examples of Scripture. God manifested himself to Moses upon Mount Sinai. And "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake."—Ex. xix, Heb. xii, 21. Here was the emotion of fear manifested by trembling and quaking. The sinner, too, may well "tremble and quake," when the thunders of the law are sounding in his ears.

David was a man of great strength of body and of mind. In the height of his power he did not consider it derogatory to his dignity as a king, and a prophet, to give expression, publicly, to the highest transports of joy. Read the account of his bringing up the ark of the Lord, from the house of Obed-edom, to the city of David: "And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window, and saw King David

leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. And Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the King of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!" To this irony David replied, "It was before the Lord. And I will yet be more vile than this, and will be base in my own sight."—2 Sam. vi, 14-22. Are there none at the present day who would have united with Michal in saying that King David had disgraced himself? None, who seem to feel, like her, that they have to support the dignity of the church? Let them take warning from her, for she bore her reproach all her days; while David realized the fulfillment of that Scripture, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—Luke xiv, 11.

Jeremiah was greatly troubled because of the defection of the religious teachers of the people. They amused their hearers with fine words, and cried, "Peace! Peace! when God had not spoken peace." Hear Jeremiah express his anguish, "Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness."—Jer. xxiii, 9. He knew what it was to be burdened for souls.

Daniel does not appear to have been wanting in intellect or nerve. The prospect of lodging in a den of lions did not frighten him. But on seeing

a vision from the Lord he says, "There remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." His awe was so great that his physical frame could not bear up under it—he fell prostrate.

On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples, there were such manifestations of feeling that the bystanders could account for on no other theory than that "These men are full of new wine."—Acts ii, 13. There was such plausibility in the objection, that Peter felt called upon to enter into a formal argument to disprove it, "These are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day."

When the Revelator, John, saw the Son of Man in his glorified body, he thus describes the effect that it produced upon him: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."—Rev. i, 17.

He assures us that in Heaven, there is the deepest emotion among the worshippers that surround the throne, "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."—Rev. xix, 5, 6.

If you have no sympathy with those who praise the Lord audibly in his sanctuary below, how do you think you will be prepared to join above in this mighty tumult of praise?

No more, or clearer, Scripture proof can be re-

quired to establish the proposition that the religion of the Bible is calculated to stir up the deepest feelings of man. If religion is the same in every age, and if under the Christian dispensation, the Spirit is to be poured out more abundantly than ever before, we may then expect, that those who are earnestly engaged in the service of the Lord, shall manifest, from time to time, the deepest emotion.

We refer, also, to the experience of those, who, in different branches of the Church of Christ, have been eminent for piety and usefulness.

The inquiry is often made, why, if this deep emotion is essential to the earnest Christian, do we not see it manifested among different denominations? Our answer is, that we do, among the eminently pious of all denominations. We will give you as many cases as our limits will permit. Luther, having gained the reputation of being one of the most learned men of his day, became awakened, by alarming providences, to his condition as a sinner. He solemnly determined to seek after holiness, as eagerly as he had pursued knowledge. For nearly two years he practiced the greatest austerities, and discharged the most self-debasing duties. But he could find no peace. Sometimes his meditations on the divine justice and wrath, awakened such terrors in him, that his bodily powers failed him, and he sometimes lay motionless as if dead. He was found one day, on the floor of his cell, without any signs of life. "It is in vain," he says to Staupitz, "that I make promises to

God; sin is always too strong for me." Staupitz told him to "look to the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood which he has shed for you; it is there you will see the mercy of God."* He looked; and his deep emotions were followed by peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost. But for these deep stirrings of soul, Luther had never been the reformer he was.

Whitefield's life furnishes another example of the deepest emotion, first of penitence, then of joy. Had his conversion been of a superficial character, his name would not have gone down to posterity as one of the most successful preachers of modern times. Whitefield sought the Lord in earnest. "He was accustomed to select Christ Church meadow as the scene, and a stormy night as the time, of his mental conflicts. He prostrated his body on the bare earth, fasted during Lent, and exposed himself to the cold till his hands began to blacken, and, by abstinence and inward struggles, so emaciated his body as to be scarcely able to creep up stairs. For seven weeks he labored under a severe illness. It was, in his own language, 'a glorious visitation.' † It gave him time and composure to make a written record and a penitent confession of his youthful sins—to examine the New Testament, and to seek, by prayer, for wisdom and for peace. The blessings thus invoked were not denied. 'The day star,' he says,

* Life of Luther, by Cubitt, p. 44-45.

† Stevens' Miscellanies, p. 24.

“arose in my heart. The spirit of mourning was taken from me. For some time I could not avoid singing psalms wherever I was, but my joy became gradually more settled. Thus were the days of my mourning ended.” From that time, Whitefield was a joyous, triumphant Christian, and the word which he preached was in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.

Mr. Flavel was an eminent minister of the Calvinistic school. His labors were greatly blessed. His works are still read with profit, by the devout of all denominations. Mr. Flavel gives an account of a man that he knew, that was wonderfully overcome with divine comforts. It is supposed that he relates his own experience. He says, “That as the person was traveling alone, with his thoughts closely fixed on the great and astonishing things of another world, his thoughts began to swell higher and higher, like the waters in Ezekiel’s vision, until at last they became an overflowing flood; such was the intenseness of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such his full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world, and the concerns thereof; and for some hours, knew not where he was, nor what he was about; but having lost a great quantity of blood at the nose he found himself so faint, that it brought him a little more to himself. And after he had washed himself at a spring, and drank of the water for his refreshment, he continued to the end of his journey, which was thirty miles; and all this while was

scarce sensible ; and says he had several trances of considerable continuance. The same blessed frame was preserved all that night, and in a lower degree, a great part of the next day ; the night passed without one wink of sleep ; and yet he declares he never had a sweeter night's rest in all his life. Still the joy of the Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of another world. And he used, for many years after, to call that day one of the days of Heaven ; and professed that he understood more of the life of Heaven by it than by all he books he ever used, or discourses he ever entertained about it.”*

In these deep experiences, is found the secret of the strength of those old divines, who shook the world in their day, and whose works are still exerting a benign influence far and wide.

The revival that took place under the labors of Edwards was characterized by the intensest feeling. No cold and heartless “profession of faith” was regarded in those days as all the experience necessary to constitute the sinner a child of God.

He gives, with approbation, many instances of the manifestation of the deepest emotion. He says, “Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape, and get into a better state. Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the

* Edwards, vol. iii, 287.

great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at nights. There have been some instances of persons that have had as great a sense of their danger and misery, as their natures could well subsist under, so that a little more would probably have destroyed them.”*

Of course this deep conviction was not produced in the minds of sinners without a corresponding depth of emotion in the hearts of believers. He represents that “Some persons have had longing desires after Christ, which have risen to that degree, as to take away their natural strength. Some have been so overcome with a sense of the dying love of Christ to such poor, wretched, and unworthy creatures, as to weaken the body. Several persons have had so great a sense of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, that nature and life have seemed almost to sink under it; and in all probability, if God had showed them a little more of himself it would have dissolved their frame.”

He gives, at considerable length, the experience of several individuals whose emotions were, at times, overpowering. We can find room for a brief account of only one, a young lady of “a rational, understanding family.” †“She was, before her conversion, of a sober and inoffensive conversation, and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She was first awakened by something she heard

* Edwards, vol. iii, pp. 240, et seq.

† Edwards, vol. iii, p. 260.

her brother say of the necessity of being in good earnest in seeking regenerating grace, together with the news of the conversion of a young woman. Her great terror," she said, was, "that she had sinned against God;" her distress grew more and more for three days, until, (as she said,) she saw nothing but blackness of darkness before her; and her very flesh trembled for fear of God's wrath. In prayer and reading the Bible she sought the Lord for a number of days. One morning, on awakening, these words came to her mind, "The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin;" they were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and His sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. Her mind was led into such contemplations and views of Christ, as filled her exceeding full of joy. All the next day she felt a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together. One morning while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fullness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons; and she felt in herself a strong inclination immediately, to go forth and warn sinners; and proposed to her brother to assist her in going from house to house. After this, seeing three persons lately converted, as they stepped in one after another at the door, so affected her, and drew forth her love to them, that it overcame her, and she almost fainted; and when they began to talk of the things of religion, it was more than she could bear, they were obliged to desist on that account. Soon

after this, she went to a private, religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time; and when the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning what she had experienced; and she began to give them an account; but as she was relating it, it revived such a sense of the same things, that her strength failed and they were obliged to take her and lay her upon the bed. Afterward she was greatly affected, and rejoiced with these words: 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain.' She endured unto the end and died triumphantly." He gives this, and some similar cases as specimens of the experiences of those who shared in this gracious out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. It seems to have been a common thing among them, for persons to lose their strength, as it is now termed.

He says, * "It is remarkable, considering in what multitudes of instances, and to how great a degree, the frame of the body has been overpowered of late, that persons' lives have, notwithstanding, been preserved, and the instances of those that have been deprived of reason have been so very few, and those, perhaps, all of them persons under the peculiar disadvantages of a weak, vapory habit of body. A merciful and careful divine hand is very manifest in it, that in so many instances where the ship has begun to sink, yet it has been upheld, and has not totally sunk. The instances of such as have been deprived of reason are so few,

* Edwards, vol. iii, p. 284.

that certainly they are not enough to cause us to be in any fright, as though this work that has been carried on in the country, was not likely to be of beneficial influence, unless we are disposed to gather up all we can to darken it, and set it forth in frightful colors."

This revival must have exceeded by far, in its effects upon the body, any that have taken place, of late years, among any denomination in this country, to justify him in saying, "that in multitudes of instances, the frame of the body has been over-powered." Yet, it seems that nobody was killed, and but few became deranged. Edwards was not in the habit of using, in his narratives, the language of exaggeration.

"These things did not begin," he says, "in this day." * "They are not new in their kind; but are things of the same nature as have been found, and well approved of in the Church of God before, from time to time.

We have a remarkable instance in Mr. Bolton, that noted minister of the Church of England, who, being awakened by the preaching of the famous Mr. Perkins, minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, was subject to such terrors as threw him to the ground, and caused him to roar with anguish; and the pangs of the new birth in him were such, that he lay pale and without sense, like one dead; as we have an account in the "Fulfilling of the Scripture," the 5th edition, p. 103, 104.

* Edwards, vol. iii, p. 236.

We have an account in the same page of another whose comforts, under the sunshine of God's presence, were so great, that he could not forbear crying out in a transport, and expressing in exclamations, the great sense he had of forgiving mercy, and his assurance of God's love. And we have a remarkable instance in the life of Mr. George Trosse, written by himself, (who, from a notoriously vicious, profligate liver, became an eminent saint, and minister of the Gospel) of terrors occasioned by awakenings of conscience, so overpowering the body, as to deprive, for some time, of the use of reason.

Yea, such extraordinary, external effects of inward impressions, have not only been to be found in here and there a single person, but there have also before now been times wherein many have been thus affected, in some particular parts of the Church of God; and such effects have appeared in congregations, in many at once. So it was in the year 1625, in the west of Scotland, in a time of a great out-pouring of the Spirit of God. It was then a frequent thing for many to be so extraordinarily seized with terror in the hearing of the word, by the Spirit of God convincing them of sin, that they fell down and were carried out of the church, who afterward proved most solid and lively Christians.

Many in France were so wonderfully affected with the preaching of the Gospel, in the time of those famous divines, Farel and Viret, that for a time they could not follow their secular business.

Many, in Ireland, in time of a great out-pouring of the Spirit there in the year 1628, were so filled with divine comforts and a sense of God, that they had but little use of either meat, drink or sleep, and professed that they did not feel the need thereof."

Edwards thus shows that these manifestations of emotion were common among earnest Christians. Of course, the devil was not pleased. Too general attention to religion was excited, and too many sinners were converted, for him to be very well satisfied. He stirred up all he could to talk against this way.

Misrepresentations and exaggerations, were freely circulated. The ministers chiefly instrumental in promoting the revival, were freely charged with looking upon them as certain evidences of a work of the Spirit. This, against a Calvinistic minister, was a most serious charge, as according to their theory it could not, from any amount of evidence before one's death, be certainly ascertained that he was converted. If he fell away, the theory was that his apparent piety was not real.

Edwards defends these manifestations as follows: * "Another thing, wherein I think some ministers have been injured, is in being very much blamed for making so much of outcries, faintings and other bodily effects; speaking of them as tokens of the presence of God, and arguments of the success of preaching; seeming to strive to their ut-

* Edwards, vol. iii, p. 343.

most to bring a congregation to that pass, and seeming to rejoice, yea, even blessing God for it, when they see these effects.

Concerning this I would observe, in the first place, that there are many things, with respect to cryings out, falling down, etc., that are charged on ministers that they are not guilty of. Some would have it, that they speak of these things as certain evidences of a work of the Spirit of God on the hearts of their hearers, or that they esteem these bodily effects, themselves, to be the work of God, as though the Spirit of God took hold of, and agitated the bodies of men; and some are charged with making these things essential, and supposing that persons cannot be converted without them; whereas I never yet could see the person that held either of these things.

But for speaking of such effects as probable tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me they are not to be blamed; because I think they are so, indeed; and, therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths of God's word, urged and enforced by proper arguments and motives, or as consequent on other means that are good, I do not scruple to speak of them, and to rejoice in them, and bless God for them as such; and that for this (as I think) good reason; viz: that from time to time, upon proper inquiry and examination, and observation of the consequence and fruits, I have found that these are all evidences that persons in whom these effects appear, are under the influ-

ence of God's Spirit, in such cases. Cryings out, in such a manner, and with such circumstances, as I have seen them from time to time, is as much an evidence to me, of the general cause it proceeds from, as language; I have learned the meaning of it the same way that persons learn the meaning of language, viz: by use and experience. I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when these things are held forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time, a much greater and more excellent effect."

* "The most specious thing that is alleged against these extraordinary effects upon the body, is, that the body is impaired and the health wronged; and that it is hard to think that God, in the merciful influences of his Spirit on men, would wound their bodies and impair their health. But if it were so pretty commonly, or in multiplied instances, (which I do not suppose it is) that persons receive a lasting wound to their health by extraordinary, religious impressions made upon their minds, yet it is too much for us to determine that God shall never bring an outward calamity, in bestowing a vastly greater, spiritual and eternal good.

Jacob, in doing his duty in wrestling with God

* Edwards, vol. ili, p. 282.

for the blessing, and while God was striving with him, at the same time that he received the blessing from God, suffered a great outward calamity from his hand; God impaired his body so that he never got over it as long as he lived; he gave him the blessing, but sent him away halting on his thigh, and he went lame all his life after. And yet this is not mentioned as if it were any diminution of the great mercy of God to him, when God blessed him and called his name Israel, because as a prince he had power with God, and had prevailed.

We cannot determine that God never shall give any person so much of a discovery of himself, not only as to weaken his body, but also to take away his life. It is supposed by very learned and judicious divines, that Moses' life was taken away after this manner; and this has also been supposed to be the case with some other saints.

Yea, I do not see any solid, sure grounds any have, to determine that God shall never make such strong impressions on the mind by his Spirit, that shall be an occasion of so impairing the frame of the body, and particularly that part of the body, the brain, that persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As I said before, it is too much for us to determine, that God will not bring an outward calamity in bestowing spiritual and eternal blessings; so it is too much for us to determine how great an outward calamity he will bring. If God gives a great increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the calamity, though the life should presently be

taken away. We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction is, when considered with all its consequences, and all that might have been consequent, if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed, whether (thus considered) it may be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin, or some more dreadful thing if it had not been."

* "It is easily accounted for, from the consideration of the nature of divine and eternal things, and the nature of man, and the laws of the union between soul and body, how a right influence, a true and proper sense of things, should have such effects on the body, even those that are of the most extraordinary kind, such as taking away the bodily strength, or throwing the body into great agonies, and extorting loud outcries."

We have given extracts from writers of other denominations. We have done this on purpose. Our object has been to show that these manifestations of religious feeling that are of late so strongly opposed, have been common in thorough revivals, among those denominations that are freest from them now. We have room to fortify our position, by only a brief reference to Methodist writers. These manifestations have been common among them as a denomination, from the beginning.

Almost all their books of biography and history abound with accounts of the extraordinary effects

* Edwards, vol. i, p. 527.

produced upon the body by the outpouring of the Spirit.*

Wesley says: "While I was preaching at Newgate, on these words: 'He that believeth hath everlasting life,' I was insensibly led without any previous design, to declare strongly and explicitly, that God willeth 'all men to be thus saved,' and pray, that 'if this were not the truth of God, he would not suffer the blind to go out of the way; but if it were, He would bear witness to His word.' Immediately one, and another, and another, sunk to the earth; *they dropped on every side as thunder-struck*. One of them cried aloud. We besought God in her behalf and He turned her heaviness into joy. A second being in the same agony, we called upon God for her also; and He spoke peace unto her soul. In the evening I was again pressed in spirit to declare, that 'Christ gave himself a ransom for all.' And almost before we called upon Him to set His seal, He answered. One was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit, that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately His abundant kindness was shown, and she loudly sang of His righteousness."

"Many were offended again, and indeed much more than before. For at Baldwin street my voice could scarce be heard, amidst the groanings of some, and the cries of others, calling to Him that is

* We would refer the reader to Bangs' History of the M. E. Church, the Autobiographies of Finley and Cartwright, the Life of Benjamin Abbott, Footprints of an Itinerant, by Maxwell P. Gaddis, and other biographical works.

‘mighty to save.’ I desired all that were sincere of heart, to beseech with me the Prince exalted for us, that He would ‘proclaim deliverance to the captives.’ And He soon showed that He heard our voice. Many of those who had been long in darkness, saw the dawn of a great light; and ten persons, I afterward found, then began to say in faith, ‘my Lord and my God.’ A Quaker who stood by, was not a little displeased at the dissimulation of these creatures, and was biting his lips, and knitting his brows, when he dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold. We besought God not to lay folly to his charge. And he soon lifted up his head and cried aloud, ‘Now I know thou art a prophet of the Lord.’ ”

“ While I was earnestly inviting all sinners to ‘enter into the holiest,’ by this ‘new and living way,’ many of those that heard, began to call upon God with strong cries and tears. Some sunk down, and there remained no strength in them, others exceedingly trembled and quaked; some were torn with a kind of convulsive motion in every part of their bodies, and that so violent, that often four or five persons could not hold one of them. I have seen many hysterical and epileptic fits; but none of them were like these in many respects. I immediately prayed, that God would not suffer those who were weak to be offended. But one woman was offended greatly; being sure they might help it if they would—no one should persuade her to the contrary, and was got three or

four yards, when she also dropped down, in as violent an agony as the rest. Twenty-six of those who had been thus affected, (most of whom during the prayers which were made for them, were in a moment filled with peace and joy) promised to call upon me the next day. But only eighteen came; by talking closely with whom, I found reason to believe some of them had gone home to their house justified. The rest seemed to be waiting patiently for it."

We cannot forbear giving as a specimen, a few extracts from the account which Bangs gives of a wonderful revival that took place in 1775 and 1776.* He quotes from Asbury's Journal the narrative given by the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, a minister of the Church of England, who participated largely in that revival, and contributed by his labors to its advancement. Mr. Jarratt says: "I have no doubt but that the work now carrying on is genuine; yet there were some circumstances attending it which I disliked; such as loud outcries, tremblings, fallings and convulsions. But I am better reconciled since I read President Edwards on that head, who observes, 'that whenever these most appear, there is always the greatest and the deepest work.' There is another thing which has given me much pain; the praying of several at one and the same time. Sometimes five or six, or more have been praying all at once, in several parts of the room, for distressed persons. Others were

* Bangs' History M. E. C. Vol. i, p. 90, et seq.

speaking by way of exhortation, so that the assembly appeared to be all in confusion, and must seem to one at a little distance, more like a drunken rabble than the worshiping of God; I was afraid that was not doing all things in decency and in order. Indeed, Dr. Edwards defends this also. But yet, I am not satisfied concerning it. *But as this abated, the work of conviction and conversion usually abated too."*

One of his correspondents, a local preacher, wrote him thus: "It is common with us for men and women to fall down as dead under an exhortation, but many more under prayer, perhaps twenty at a time. And some that have not fallen to the earth, have shown the same distress, wringing their hands, smiting their breasts and begging all to pray for them."

Mr. Lee, in an account which he gives of a revival in 1787, says: "Hundreds of the believers were so overcome with the power of God that they fell down, and lay helpless on the floor or on the ground; and some of them continued in that helpless condition for a considerable time, and were happy in God beyond description. When they came to themselves, it was generally with loud praises to God, and with tears and expressions enough to melt the hardest heart."

The next day, "while the ministers were preaching, the power of the Lord was felt among the people in such a manner that they roared and screamed so loud that the preacher could not be heard, and he was compelled to stop. Many of

the wealthy people, both men and women, were seen lying in the dust, sweating and rolling on the ground in their fine broadcloths or silks, crying for mercy.”*

The more valuable a currency, the more liable it is to be counterfeited. It is so with religion—both as a whole and in all its parts. We never hear of infidels being deceived in those who claim to be infidels. But it sometimes turns out that those who profess to be Christians are, in reality, sinners. Some who claim to be governed by Christian integrity, are wanting in common honesty. That man, so gentlemanly, and quiet, and liberal, so free from every thing like having demonstrations, was clearly convicted of several forgeries, which he committed while superintendent of the Sabbath school; and, in all financial matters, the most prominent member of the church. But shall we cease to insist upon righteousness, as an essential element of the Christian character, because some assume to have it, who have it not? There is no doubt but that the less said upon this point, the more easy it is to multiply converts.

Let there be, in any community, the manifestations of deep, religious feeling and strong faith in God, and it is probable that there will be imitations. Paul says that “the kingdom of God,” or true religion in the soul of man, “is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”—Rom. xiv, 17. The righteousness and the peace are

* Bangs, vol. 1, p. 265.

imitated, why should we not expect that the joy will be? The only reason why there is not more of the counterfeit, is because there is so little of the genuine. When Moses wrought his miracles before Pharaoh, the Egyptians did the same, on a smaller scale, with their enchantments.

In Job's day, "When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them."—Job i, 6.

Paul says: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness."—2 Cor. xi, 14, 15. The man who prayed the loudest and longest in a prayer-meeting which we once attended, on the way home alone that evening, stole some cattle feeding by the road-side, drove them all night, and sold them in the morning. The wickedest man may appear to be the most engaged in religion. But shall we, on that account, oppose all manifestations of the Spirit? Because some who shout in meetings do not live right at home, shall we cease to insist upon "joy in the Holy Ghost" as an essential part of true religion? We might, with the same propriety, give up integrity. There is a still stronger reason for giving up sound doctrine—for even "The devils also believe and tremble."—Jas. ii, 19.

To the supernatural element in Christianity there is the strongest opposition. On this account, many who have felt its power, are ready to ignore it upon what seems to be a plausible pre-

text. It was so in Paul's day. "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"—Gal. iii, 3. It was so in Wesley's day. He says: "We met at Fetter Lane, to humble ourselves before God, and own he had justly withdrawn his Spirit from us, for our manifold unfaithfulness. We acknowledged our having grieved him by our divisions; one saying, 'I am of Paul;' another, 'I am of Apollos,' by our leaning again to our own works, and in trusting in them, instead of Christ, by 'our resting in these little beginnings of sanctification,' which it had pleased him to work in our souls; and, above all, by blaspheming his work among us, imputing it either to nature, to the force of imagination and animal spirits, or even to the delusion of the devil. In that hour we found God with us as at the first. Some fell prostrate upon the ground. Others burst out, as with one consent, into loud praise and thanksgiving. And many openly testified, there had been no such day as this since January the first, preceding."

We must learn to take forth the precious from the vile, "that we may be to the people as the mouth of God."—Jer. xv, 19. We must "Try the Spirits whether they are of God," (1 John iv, 1,) lest we "be found even to fight against God."—Acts v, 39.

The cloven foot cannot long be successfully concealed. If physical manifestations are from self, or from Satan, there will, in time, be apparent a self-sufficient spirit that refuses to be instructed or

reproved ; or a bitter spirit that treats as enemies those by whom he is not received ; or an ambitious spirit that endeavors to create a party that he may lead ; or an indolent spirit that neglects, by faithful labor, to earn an honest living ; or an evident neglect of the duties growing out of the established relations of life. These are not the fruits of the Spirit. Charity does not require you to act as if they were.

But if the Spirit that overpowers the physical strength, or excites to unusual manifestations, leaves the one upon whom it operates, more humble and teachable, more careful of the feelings of others, more considerate, and more conscientious in the discharge of the practical, every-day duties of life, do not, as you would save yourself from spiritual death, dare to oppose it. "And see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."—Rev. vi, 6.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRAYER.

"Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous."—Hab. i, 16.

Successful men too often rely upon the means by which they obtained success. Many lose sight of God, and attribute their achievements to their own skill and courage and prudence. Some ridicule the idea of an overruling Providence, and rely implicitly upon their own good fortune. "They sacrifice unto their net"—worship the means by which they gained their end. Then God steps in, defeats their well-laid plans and keeps alive the remembrance of Himself upon the earth.

"The King spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty."—Dan. iv, 30. The same hour the judgments of God fell upon him, and he went out a raving maniac, from men to dwell among beasts, from a palace to the wilderness.

When Napoleon was about to invade Russia, a friend endeavored to dissuade him from the undertaking. His argument failing, he quoted the proverb, "Man proposes, but God disposes." To this, Bonaparte indignantly replied, "*I* propose as well as dispose." This was the turning point in his career. He fell as rapidly as he had risen.

Churches rely upon an educated ministry; and so they build theological seminaries to supply them with ministers, instead of praying "the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest"—Matt. ix, 38. Ministers, succeeding in the use of particular sermons, in holding protracted meetings, and in the employment of special measures, come to depend upon these for success. By degrees the church becomes a worldly organization, governed by the maxims of worldly prudence; and the religion which it promotes, a mixture of worldly sagacity and pride, and a mere nominal acknowledgement of the authority of God. His law is, by common consent, set aside, when it comes in conflict with the clamors of selfishness, or the imperious demands of fashion.

The religion which gives victory in life, triumph in death, and a home in Heaven, is the work of God in the heart of man. Whatever other means are employed to bring about the result, it is, in each individual case, effected in answer to prayer. Saul of Tarsus was miraculously convinced that Jesus was the Messiah; but before he was converted, it was said of him, "Behold he prayeth."—Acts ix, 11. Means in themselves are not effectual. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."—Zech. iv, 6. But the Spirit is poured out in answer to prayer. When we find anything promised in the word of God, we are not to neglect to seek it, because it is promised; but we are to pray for it on that very account. "Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet

for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock."—Ezek. xxxvi, 37. The promise is absolute; but the time of its fulfillment depends upon the prayers of his people. So Christ promised to his disciples the gift of power. Therefore they prayed for it until the answer came.

He who would prevail with men, must first prevail with God. Jacob, after wrestling all night in prayer, had a most friendly meeting with his more powerful brother, whom he had grievously wronged, and whom he therefore justly feared. If we would do effective work for Christ, we must be able to pray in the Spirit, until Divine grace melts obdurate hearts. Before Nehemiah undertook to rebuild the broken down walls of Jerusalem, he says, "I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of Heaven."—Neh. i, 4. He confessed his sins, the sins of his people, sought help of the Lord, and as God opened the way, went about the work to which he was called.

When Daniel would understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God, he says, "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession."—Dan. ix, 3, 4.

The Bible abounds in illustrations of the fact that God answers prayer in behalf of others. It therefore requires it. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions

and giving of thanks, be made for all men.”—1 Tim, ii, 1.

Many, who profess to be working for Christ, have not learned to pray. They have a vague and incorrect idea as to what prayer is. While in form addressing the throne of grace, in reality they are addressing the people. They pray to be heard of men. Said one of the daily papers of a prayer offered at the dedication of some public works: “It was the most eloquent prayer that was ever made to the citizens of Boston.” If you wish to tell the people about the perfections of the Almighty—and at the best our knowledge of the Infinite One must be exceedingly limited—do not take occasion to do it under the form of prayer. When we are starving for bread, do not attempt to satisfy us with knowledge. In public prayer, be the mouth-piece to God for the needy and burdened. Try to take the people with you to the Mercy Seat, and intercede in their behalf until the blessing of God comes down upon every waiting soul. ~~X~~ If you would bring the people to God, you must first bring God to the people. If you fail here, you fail utterly of doing any great, permanent good. The potter, in making a vessel of clay, wets it thoroughly, and every now and then dips his fashioning hand in water. You can break dry clay, but you cannot mold it. You must pray for rain until the cloud appears, and the shower falls. But do not, under pretence of praying, deliver sermons or exhortations to the people—much less, do not make any unkind allusions tending to bring

any one into reproach. When you pray, never retaliate upon any one, or seek to punish him, but "Forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in Heaven, may forgive you your trespasses."—Mark xi, 25.

Of all the exercises of religion, prayer should be the most fervent. Whatever the occasion may be, cold and formal prayers are utterly without excuse. They come from the head of one whose heart at best, is lukewarm. Elegant expressions should not be studied; no attempt at eloquence should be made, but in simplicity and earnestness the soul's desires should be poured into the ears of an answering God. He can pray in earnest, who prays aright. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom. viii, 26. He who prays in sincerity will have the aid of the Spirit. But it may lead him to pray in a very different manner from what he intended. Many appear to think we can pray for what we please. In merely formal or complimentary prayers this can be easily done. But when one prays as the Spirit helps, he is directed by the Spirit, and not by men, what to pray for. We have been in meetings where they appeared to consider prayer like an order on a wholesale house for goods; he who led in prayer could pray for anybody or anything he was requested to, just as the merchant—and these were mostly merchants—could order any goods which

their customers called for. The whole affair appeared like a commercial transaction. We should pray for others. We are taught in our Lord's Prayer, and in many passages of the Scriptures to pray for others; but in doing it, if we pray in earnest, we must pray as the Spirit leads. A prayer-meeting, conducted according to a previously prepared programme is a cold affair. There is not usually even the warmth of friction. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—2 Cor. iii, 17. But in every meeting you hold, you should see to it that you have the presence of the Spirit of the Lord.

We were once stationed in a village church which had declined in numbers from about three hundred to ninety. The decline in piety was in a still larger proportion. There were but very few who lived in a state of justification before God. Some of the members were on such bad terms that they would not speak to each other. There was a great lack of confidence in even the honesty of some of the leading men. We preached to the church as close as we could for nearly three months without any general breaking down. The burden came on us in overwhelming power one Sunday evening at church, and we lay on our face in the altar for over an hour, it was said, struggling with God in an agony of prayer, with groanings that could not be uttered. It seemed as if we should die if we could not see the people saved. Some who knew nothing of the burden for souls, attempted to sing and change the order

of the meeting. But they could not do it. The meeting was closed in deep solemnity. A revival immediately broke out, during which many were saved, and conviction was general through the village and country around.

You may impart instruction on religious, as the lecturer does on scientific, subjects; you may move men as the politician moves them with his appeals; but unless you have this spirit of prevailing prayer, you will not see them, as the result of your labors, humble themselves before God and seek his kingdom and righteousness.

A dying minister said: "I feel happy and assured of my salvation, as a poor, lost sinner, saved through a Saviour's precious, atoning blood." But there seemed to be something weighing upon his mind. One inquired, "My dear brother, is there anything that is now a cause of anxiety to you?" The dying man put his hand under his pillow, and drew out a piece of paper, on which were written the names of twenty-five unconverted, leading men of his parish, and with tears he said: "Yes, there is one cause of anxiety, and here it is: It is the salvation of these twenty-five men. I have prayed much for these twenty-five men, name by name. If I could know that these men would be converted, I could then say: 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'" With this great burden upon his heart he died.

Some time after his death, at an ecclesiastical gathering, his successor was inquired of about

these men. With much feeling he replied, "Brethren, every one of these twenty-five men has been converted. We believe they were converted in answer to the prayer of our sainted brother." "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—Jas. v, 16.

If we would prevail with God, we must persevere in prayer. Elijah prayed seven times before there was the appearance of rain. God would have men thoroughly in earnest. Christ prayed in the garden in such agony of spirit that he sweat great drops of blood. Finney says, "I have known persons to pray till they were all wet with perspiration, in the coldest weather in winter. I have known persons to pray for hours, till their strength was all exhausted with the agony of their minds. Such prayers prevail with God."

There is too little praying of that kind in these days. The tendency is to take things easy. Such praying would instantly kill many modern revivals, which are carried on with little solemnity and no travail of soul. The Saviour teaches us that we should hold on in prayer, and not take it so easy when the answer is delayed. A great deal of what we call submission is really indifference. "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke xviii, 1. Do not give up because the answer does not come at once. If what you ask is in accordance with God's will, insist upon it that you have an answer. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him,

though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."—Luke xviii, 7, 8. Bishop Hall says, "Every good prayer knocketh at Heaven for a blessing; but an importunate prayer pierceth it, and makes way into the ears of God."

Of the learned and studious John Smith it is said, "That he had resolved very much to lay aside other studies and to travail in the salvation of men's souls, after whose good he most earnestly thirsted." Of John Welsh, a godly man, a Puritan, it is recorded that he was often on the coldest winter nights, found weeping on the ground, and wrestling with the Lord in behalf of his people. He said, "I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, while I know not how it is with many of them."

The late Dr. J. W. Redfield was one of the most successful revivalists of modern times. The work of grace that attended his labors everywhere, was as remarkable for its thoroughness as for its extent. Wherever he held meetings, the entire community was moved by an all-pervading, religious excitement. He was a preacher of wonderful clearness, depth and eloquence. But if he was convincing in argument, and graphic in description, and persuasive in appeal, he was absolutely overwhelming in prayer. He led those who united with him, through a confession that left no covering, no pride, no self-righteousness,—a consecration that took in the utmost of service that a human being can render to his Creator, an utter renunciation of

all claim to use one's faculties and possessions, except to the glory of God and the good of man; a willingness to take any position, from the poor-house to the throne, that God might appoint; a readiness to suffer persecution that made reproach, and loss of standing, and property, and even life seem too insignificant to be taken into account in comparison with the glory that was to follow—and a faith in Christ that relied so entirely on His atonement, that the vilest felt freely and fully acquitted, and upon his power, that the weakest felt certain of a glorious triumph over all his foes. If his preaching took out every prop on which man, away from his God, is wont to lean; his praying seemed to place under the sinking feet, promises so solid that they would hold one up, though heaven and earth should pass away. If his preaching brought the sinner down to the depths of despair, his praying raised him up to the rapturous assurance of receiving forgiving love.

Rev. C. G. Finney did more, perhaps, than any other man in his generation for the establishment and spread of Christianity in its purity. Educated a lawyer, but powerfully converted while a young man, he commenced at once to labor for the salvation of men, with a success that astonished all—and with a fidelity to truth, a boldness, a disregard of old prejudices that stood in the way of God's work, and an opposition to fashionable and church-sanctioned sins that provoked opposition from even leading men and ministers of his own denomination. But he attributed his success to prevailing

prayer. At one time when his health had given out under his excessive labors, he took a sea voyage; but not having derived the benefit that he had expected, he was greatly dejected over the gloomy prospect of the work to which he had given his life. He found that the opposition to revivals had grieved the Spirit. His own health had broken down, and he knew of no other evangelist to take his place. The paper which they had started to set them right before the public, the *New York Evangelist*, seemed on the point of failing. He says, "My soul was in an utter agony. I spent almost the entire day in prayer in my state-room, or walking the deck in intense agony, in view of the state of things. In fact I felt crushed with the burden that was on my soul. It was the spirit of prayer that was upon me; that which I had often before experienced in kind, but perhaps never before to such a degree, for so long a time. I besought the Lord to go on with his work, and to provide himself with such instrumentalities as were necessary. After a day of unspeakable wrestling, and agony in my mind, just at night the subject cleared up to my mind. The Spirit bade me believe that all would come out right, and that God had yet a work for me to do; that I might be at rest; that the Lord would go forward with his work, and give me strength to take any part in it that he desired. But I had not the least idea what the course of his providence would be."

On his return to New York, to save the *Evan-*

gelist from ruin, he delivered in his church a series of lectures on revivals, which the editor reported. New subscribers came in at the rate of sixty a day. The lectures were published in a book, and twelve thousand copies were sold as fast as they could be got ready. They were circulated in England, Canada, Australia, and wherever the English language was spoken. One publisher in London issued eighty thousand copies. They were translated into French, German and Welsh. Wherever they went they were the means of promoting revivals of religion. "But," says this man of God, "this was not of man's wisdom. Let the reader remember that long day of agony and prayer at sea, that God would do something to forward the work of revivals, and enable me, if he desired to do it, to take such a course as to help forward the work. I felt certain then that my prayers would be answered; and I have regarded all that I have since been able to accomplish, as, in a very important sense, an answer to the prayers of that day. The spirit of prayer came upon me as a sovereign grace, bestowed upon me without the least merit, and in despite of all my sinfulness. He pressed my soul in prayer, until I was enabled to prevail; and through infinite riches of grace in Christ Jesus, I have been many years witnessing the wonderful results of that day of wrestling with God. In answer to that day's agony, he has continued to give me the spirit of prayer."

Dr. James C. Jackson, in the *Laws of Life*,

shows the efficacy of prayer in a case that came under his own observation. It was in a settlement made up mostly of people from Holland. They were a simple, rural community, numbering in all, two or three hundred. The people generally professed religion and belonged to the Methodist Protestant Church.

“There lived in that neighborhood a man who intellectually was as gifted as any man in it. He was by nature a marked man; but was a poor, degraded, debased creature, because he was an habitual drunkard. He belonged to this church, and between Thursday night of one week and Thursday night of the succeeding, as the weeks went by, this man would have a debauch—a regular drunken carousal—becoming so drunk that he would have to be picked up and carried home to his sorrowing, saddened wife and mortified children. When he got over his debauch, he would go to prayer-meeting in a very humble frame of mind, beseech the brothers and sisters to pray for him that he might become sober and ‘hold out faithful to the end.’ They would pray for him, rebuke him, criticise him, and deal with him, and he would promise amendment and then go out and get drunk again. So the thing went on for months, he getting drunk, and then confessing; they reproving, rebuking, but letting him stay in the church, until it became scandalous to outsiders; and they taunted the members of the church for their inconsistency in retaining such a man in their membership; but they had some

very faithful men and women, whose fertile forecast led them to perceive that if the church was not the proper place for such a man, then of a truth he was an outcast, and must be given over, body and soul to the devil. They therefore were indisposed to cast him out, and hoped that some day or other the power of God would come upon him and change him.

On a given Sabbath afternoon, I think it was when the meeting house was filled, and as the sun was going down, there arose a girl, not more than nineteen years of age, I believe, who said : ‘ I have had a vision from God ; my inner sense has been quickened, and I am led to stand up to-day and say that as a church we have pursued altogether a wrong course with reference to our erring brother. He has pursued a wrong course. We have been praying to God that he would strengthen our brother so that he might be able to overcome his degrading vice and become a sober man. We have brought all the arguments in our power to bear on him. We have appealed to his love of manhood, to his love of his wife and children, to his need of being sober in order that he may support himself and them in comfort. We have told him how he was disgracing his Christian profession and how he was hurting the church. Every moral consideration that we have been able to urge, again and again has been presented to him by almost every one of us. Now, brothers and sisters, there is one thing that we have not done. We have not confessed our helplessness to save this man, nor his utter in-

ability to save himself. We have talked exactly as though he might put himself beyond the all-controlling power of his appetite, and we have failed. I propose a new plan; that we make an opening here and invite this man to come into its center, and those of us who feel that we have no strength to help him shall insist on his confessing, not to us, as he has been in the habit of doing, but to Jesus; that he is a poor, miserable, lost, degraded, debased wretch, a disgrace to himself and a dishonor to this church; and that he shall lie down here on his face and cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Lord Jesus Christ save or I perish!" Kneeling down by his side let us make the same confession to Christ, and put the whole burden of saving this man off his own and off our shoulders, on to Jesus, our Master.'

The audience shouted, 'Amen! amen!' 'That is it!' 'Glory to God!' 'Make a circle and let Brother —— come in!' 'Let us all go to Jesus with this case!' They did. They rose upon their feet, made a hollow circle, and into it this poor, old, blear-eyed, decrepit, debauched, thick-lipped brother came; and down he went on to the floor, and they kneeled about him, and called on Jesus for help. Till then I never had witnessed such a scene. For twenty minutes it was like a Babel—calling and praying, agonizing and crying, weeping and wailing; and then there came a stillness over the house—it seemed like a wave of peace. First one, and then another arose, and without a word shook hands, bade each other good bye, and

went out as solemn as if they had been in the presence of the dead. The last man to get up from the floor was this poor drunkard. He went home, and from that day until the day of his death, he never touched a drop of liquor. He became clothed in his right mind, and he supported his family well. He was a man of wonderful spiritual and enlightened activity in every good word and work, and when he died, an old man, went away from us clothed with the graces of the Spirit."

The failure with Christian workers is, in most cases, a failure in prayer. Many are wanting in a personal experience of saving grace; others in wisdom and prudence; others in courage and fidelity; but if they would pray as they should, they would be led to see their deficiencies and seek to have them supplied.

~~X~~There is nothing which so effectually removes prejudices, and prepares the people to listen candidly to the truth as a humble, believing prayer, breathed from the depths of a broken heart into the ear of God. If you are a preacher, before you go into the pulpit, go to the closet and plead with God until the cloud of His presence goes with you. However cold the church, let the atmosphere of the pulpit be warmed by the breath of Heaven. Be a man of prayer.

CHAPTER XIV.

PERSONAL EFFORT.

“Go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up.”—*Mat. xvii, 27.*

To fish with a hook, requires no assistance. A skillful hand, with a suitable hook and line, and bait, can, where fish are plenty, secure a good supply. Many make the greater part of their living in this way.

In the work of the Lord, notwithstanding the importance of preaching, much can be done by personal effort. In war, cities are not generally taken by firing cannon alone: to reduce the place, the bombardment must be followed up by a vigorous assault. So the truth proclaimed in preaching, to accomplish its end—the salvation of the soul—must be pressed home to the heart and conscience of the hearer, by personal appeal and direction. Many who were moved under a sermon or exhortation, but not sufficiently to act, have been led to Christ by those who went to them with a few fervent words from a heart full of solicitude for their safety. A scale very nearly balanced is easily turned; so one “almost persuaded to become a Christian,” is fully persuaded by the personal appeal of a loving heart.

It is in order that there may be many prepared to do this personal work, that successful ministers

endeavor, first of all, to bring church members up to a revival state. John Smith was a remarkably successful preacher of the English Wesleyan Church, half a century ago. His biographer says of him, "The building up of believers in the most holy faith, was a principal object of Mr. Smith's ministry, but he never considered this kind of labor truly successful, except as its results were indicated in the conversion of sinners. That edification he justly deemed of a very low and questionable order, which was not accompanied by a spirit of intercession for those without God, and by the works of faith and the labor of love. He rationally argued that where there were no answers to prayer, the throne of grace could not be very ardently importuned; where there was no out-pouring of the Spirit, the promise of the Spirit could not be very determinately pleaded; where there was no exertion for perishing men, there could not be much of the bowels of Jesus Christ; and whether a Christian society can be correctly esteemed in a high and advancing state of improvement, where prayer is cold and cursory, where faith is weak, and love is listless, it requires no great sagacity to determine."

Many have been converted through personal effort. It was by the testimony of his wife's "little maid," a captive and a slave, that Naaman, the Syrian General, was directed to the prophet, and converted to the worship of the true God.

Saul of Tarsus was convicted in a supernatural manner, but it was by the agency of Ananias, a

well-known disciple, that he "received his sight, and was filled with the Holy Ghost."—Acts ix, 17. The work of the Spirit in him was of the most powerful character; but it was not carried on to completion without the intervention of human agency. If it was the design of God that men should be converted without the aid of their fellow men, here is a case where it would seem most probable that it would have taken place. So far as we know, no mortal had anything to do with his awakening. It was effected wholly by Divine power. His mind had not been turned towards Christianity by reading or by hearing the truth as it is in Jesus stated or explained. He was in no mood to listen had opportunity presented. On the contrary he was full of rage, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."—Acts ix, 1. "Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—Acts ix, 3-4. Why was not this man, thus smitten by the power of God, at once converted by the same power? Doubtless to teach us that in the salvation of man, man must take an active part. We are all powerless without the aid of the Holy Ghost—talent, learning, logic, eloquence avail nothing without His power, and yet we see there is a work in soul-saving, which the Holy Ghost does not often do, except in connection with the agency of a believer.

The reading of the word of God is an important

means of grace. Many are convicted by reading the Bible. The treasurer of the Queen of the Ethiopians, a man of great authority, was awakened in this way. But to obtain the needed light, he was not directed to other parts of the Scriptures; but Philip the Evangelist was sent to him, and being invited to ride in the chariot with him, he "preached unto him Jesus."—Acts viii, 35. He gave a willing ear to the instructions, believed, was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing.—Acts viii, 37-39.

The Apostle Paul laid great stress upon preaching. He represents it as indispensable to the work of God. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?—Rom. x, 14-15. Yet he did not rely for success alone upon the public preaching of the Gospel. To the elders of the Church of Ephesus he says, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind . . . and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Acts xx, 18-21.

From this it is evident that the Apostle was not only a laborious, faithful preacher, but he did a

great deal of what is now called pastoral visiting. The pastor who fails in this, however brilliant he may be in the pulpit, fails in his ministry. Souls are not saved through his labors. He may, at first perhaps, have a revival; but if he bestows no personal attention to his converts, they will backslide upon his hands. It is impossible for a minister to keep up a religious interest among his people unless he feels a sufficient interest in their religious welfare to visit them at their homes. How is it possible, for any length of time, to adapt public discourses to the wants of a people, unless the preacher knows what these wants are? How can he learn these wants in any other way, so well as from themselves? Unless a preacher becomes acquainted with the religious state of his people, by lending a patient ear to the story of their difficulties and temptations, his preaching will be too general and indefinite to do much good. If he does not mingle with his people, they might as well save the expense of supporting him: and let a good elocutionist read from the pulpit every Sabbath, a sermon from Robert Hall, or Tillotson, or Wesley. These sermons would be more likely to meet their wants: for they were written by live men, to meet the spiritual necessities of the people to whom they were delivered.

More preachers fail through lack of pastoral visiting than for want of preaching ability. For fifteen years one part of our duty has been to listen to the complaints that people make against their preachers. We are safe in saying that there

are ten complaints of a lack of pastoral visiting to one of a lack of ability and fidelity in the pulpit.

Social visiting, for your own pleasure, does not meet the demands of the case. It may quiet your conscience and render you acceptable to a few; but enjoying the hospitality of friends is a very different thing from teaching the people "from house to house." Any sinner can sit down to a feast, and enjoy a visit with those whose tastes and manners are congenial. When you are doing that, do not delude yourself with the idea that you are discharging an obligation which you owe to Christ and to the souls of men. If you are a preacher, you should visit every family which attends your preaching. You should also go to those with the offer of salvation who do not place themselves under any religious instruction. The Apostle did not consider his duty done when he taught Christians from house to house, but he testified, "both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Acts xx, 21. Do this work, with an earnest longing for the salvation of men and the results will soon be visible. Pass none by. You cannot go where the Spirit of God has not gone before you. The most degraded—the most aristocratic need your help. They may be too proud to ask it, but if you offer it, "in all humility of mind," the cases in which it will be rejected will be exceedingly rare.

When you go to visit a family, converse separately with each one that is accessible. There

may be as many religious states as there are individuals. You must not assume because the children are gay, that the parents are indifferent ; or that the children can have no feeling because the parents neglect salvation. It may be that to some one in the most indifferent household, God will enable you to speak a word in season.

Your success in this work will depend largely upon your tenderness and sympathy of spirit. Do not affect it when you do not feel it—but before you go out, pray in your closet until your heart is melted with compassion for the unsaved. He has not labored in vain who can say to a people among whom he has served, “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”—Acts xx, 31. Reproaches harden ; tears melt.

Said David Cooper, “I had a difficulty with my next door neighbor. He threatened me with violence if I ever entered his door. As soon as I was fully saved I went home and told my wife. I left her in her bed-room praying, and with my heart full of love for my neighbor whom I had hated, I hastened over to his house. I must have looked differently from what I had done, for as I reached out my hand he took it cordially, and as I asked his forgiveness, and told him what God had done for me, and invited him to my house to a prayer-meeting that evening, he burst into tears and said, ‘I used to feel that way a good many years ago, but I am far from it now.’ But that evening he was led back to a loving Saviour’s arms.”

Ministers sometimes excuse themselves from personal efforts for the salvation of souls on the ground of diffidence, or lack of time or skill. Such excuses may be well-meant, but they are delusive. The most timid person that ever lived, when filled with the love of God, delights to speak of that love to others. Those who are too diffident to speak to their neighbors about the salvation of their souls, are very ready to converse about other matters in which they feel an interest. For a minister never to say anything in private conversation about that which he pretends to advocate in the pulpit, shows conclusively that he feels no real interest in the matter. He loves himself, and not the souls of his fellow-men. He works for his salary, and not from the constraining love of Christ. Did you ever know a politician who had nothing to say in advocacy of his principles except in set and formal speeches? Why, he talks politics wherever he goes. So, if you are full of the religion of Jesus, you will have something to say in its favor whenever occasion offers. You will make occasion where none seems to be presented.

As for want of time, you should use the time you have, to do the most important things first. And what can be of greater importance than saving your own soul, by earnest efforts to save the souls of others? Well paid public efforts alone, do not meet the requirements of Christ. A child needs more care, besides its regular meals. Rivers are good in their place, but they do not supercede the necessity of showers. Preaching is important,

but it never was designed to take the place of personal effort for the salvation of souls.

John Wesley was one of the greatest preachers of modern times. Many were saved under his preaching. But he saw the absolute necessity of giving personal instruction and advice to those who were awakened; if he would reap the fruit of his labors. To effect this the more readily, he instituted class-meetings, in which such directions can be given to each individual in turn as his spiritual condition seems to demand. But in the class-meeting a few of the most earnest only of church-members are reached. The great world of the indifferent are outside. You must strive to reach them. If they will not come to you, then go to them.

Carvosso was a plain, English farmer. The highest position he filled in the church was that of class-leader. He was converted through the prayers and efforts of his sister, who, having found the Saviour when away at service, walked twelve miles to her mother's house to warn her family to flee from the wrath to come. Her brother was clearly converted. Soon after, he sought a clean heart, and in answer to earnest prayer for it, received the full witness that the blood of Jesus cleansed him from all sin. He walked in the light, and in a few years began to hold prayer-meetings. Some were saved. He aimed to get souls justified and sanctified, by the exercise of present faith in Christ. Many were saved through his labors. When he obtained a bare competence by industry

and frugality, he did not risk it in speculation, but retired from business, and gave himself up wholly to the work of saving souls—mainly by personal efforts. The success with which he met, seems almost incredible in these days, when so much dependence is placed upon organized and public efforts. Everywhere he went, souls were converted and sanctified through his labors. Careless, hardened sinners yielded to his faithful warnings, and loving entreaties to seek salvation by immediate repentance and faith in Christ.

A few years since there was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit among the natives of Ceylon, under the labors of American missionaries. The Rev. Mr. Winslow, one of them, says: "There were few cases of permanent conviction in which religious impressions were not cherished by much patient labor of the missionaries or their assistants, in *conversing and praying with individuals alone*. It was this *repeated and personal* application of truth which principally took effect." So to secure the fruit of revivals, impressions publicly made must be followed up by personal efforts.

Said Henry Martyn, when thinking of going on a foreign mission, "If I had true love for souls, I should *long and labor for those around me*, and afterwards for the conversion of the heathen," and often did he redeem time from study, from recreation and from the intercourse of friends, that he might enter the abodes of misery, to arouse the unthinking slumberer, or administer consolation to the dejected penitent.

James Brainard Taylor, when a student, said : " There are many opportunities *now* of doing good. The call from many a lowly cottage is, *Come over and help us*. Resolved, that I will, the Lord being my helper, think, speak, and act as an *individual* ; for as such I must live ; as such I must die, stand before God, and be damned or saved forever and ever. I have been waiting for others ; I must act as if I were the only one to act, and wait no longer."

Harlan Page was a man of ordinary talents and common education, a house-joiner by trade. He depended upon his daily labor for the support of his family. He was converted when twenty-three years of age, and on his dying-bed said, " When I first obtained a hope I felt that *I must labor for souls*. *I prayed year after year that God would make me the means of saving souls*." This was the burden of his heart and the aim of his life. He brought hundreds to Christ by *prayer and personal effort*. When at his work he let no opportunity pass to speak with those with whom he came in contact, about the salvation of their souls. When his day's work was done, he either hastened to a meeting, or to converse and pray with anxious or careless souls. Whenever he saw an impression was made, he followed it up day after day, until the person was either converted to God, or till, as was seldom, he felt there was no hope in the case.

Said a preacher of Mr. Page after his death : " I was induced to engage as teacher in his Sabbath-school, and though I was then destitute of faith, he welcomed me and won my confidence and love.

Very soon he began to address me with the utmost apparent tenderness and anxiety in reference to my own salvation. His words sunk deep into my heart. They were strange words, for though I had lived among professors of religion, he was the first who for nine or ten years had taken me by the hand and kindly asked: 'Are you a Christian? Do you intend to be a Christian? Why not *now*?' Each succeeding Sabbath brought him to me with anxious inquiries after my soul's health." Almost as a matter of course, this young man soon became converted.

At one place where Mr. Page went and worked at his trade—fifty-seven days at seventy-five cents a day—he established and maintained a prayer-meeting every Wednesday evening—another on Sunday morning at sunrise—Sabbath School in the afternoon—and meeting again in the evening—visited the sick, the careless and the awakened. He took measures for the formation of a church and the settlement of a pastor.

He taught one school five, and another two winters. Of one hundred and twenty-five different scholars, whose history was afterwards sought out, it was found that eighty-four had become Christians, and six ministers of the Gospel.

In 1825 he was appointed agent of the American Tract Society in New York. One consideration that led him to change his field of labor was, that he could not think of any young persons within the bounds of the congregation to which he had belonged, whom he had not seriously addressed, either

personally or by letter, on the subject of their salvation. His labors here were crowned directly with the conversion of many of the employees of the Tract and Bible House. Said one of his associates, "During the nine years in which we were associated in labors, I do not know that I ever passed an interview with him long enough to have any interchange of thought and feeling, in which I did not receive from him an impulse heavenward—an impulse onward in duty to God and the souls of men."

After the death of this man of God, a fund of two thousand dollars was raised by subscription for the relief of his family. A mechanic, who gave ten dollars, said that one morning as he was sitting in church alone, having gone early, "a plain man came in, and sitting by my side, after a kind salutation, said: 'I trust you love the Saviour?' The question instantly filled my eyes with tears. *I had been preached to at arm's length all my days in New Hampshire*; but this was the first time in my life that ever a Christian thus kindly and directly put such a question to my heart. We conversed considerably together. At his request I gave him my name and residence. The next day he came into my shop, and brought me the tract, 'Way to be saved.' He called again and again. I became interested in him, and the next Sabbath joined his Sabbath school: was brought, as I hope, to Christ, and soon united with the church."

Would not the same degree of holy living, of devotion to the work of soul-saving, and of faith in

God be attended now with similar results? Then, do not say that you can do nothing, because spiritual death reigns around you. If your heart is full of love for Christ, and of compassion for your fellow-men, you can find some whom you can influence. Persevere in your efforts—use all proper expedients in which love is so fruitful, to win men to God.

In this work you will need Heavenly wisdom. If you set yourself about it, simply to do your duty, and talk with men about religion, without regard to the acknowledged proprieties of life, you will do more harm than good. If you are yourself saved, and are honestly laboring to save others, but do not see it done, you should carefully inquire if there is not something wrong in your manner of working. It is not true that we should do our duty and be contented to see nothing done, and leave the results to God. We should not be satisfied with this in fishing or in farming. We should look for the desired results. If we did not realize them in one way, we should try another. If we found that others succeeded where we failed, we should endeavor to learn their secret, and profit by their example. Why should we not in soul-saving? You do not go to catch fish simply because you are at leisure; you choose a time when you think they will seize your bait. So, to reach men, you should select a time when the probability is greatest that they may yield to your influence. Time, and place, and manner, all are to be taken into account.

Do not abruptly ask a stranger to disclose to you his spiritual state. Show him first that you deserve his confidence. If you appear meddlesome, men of sense will avoid you. Until you can gain the confidence of those with whom you converse, it will be of but little use to press upon them the claims of Christ.

Avoid a controversial spirit and manner. Do not make exaggerated statements, that will be almost certain to provoke opposition. Be mild in your spirit, candid, sincere and temperate in your expressions, and moderate in your manner. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."—2 Tim. ii, 24–26. Weigh these words. If you are a "servant of the Lord" they are addressed to you. They are imperative—"must not," "must be." If you do what you are here told you must not do—if you fail to be what you are told you must be; do not wonder that, when you endeavor, by personal effort to save souls, you meet with such distressing failures. Do not give up in despair, but come to God for the needed qualifications.

Be careful and not discourage those whom you would help. Whatever of good there is in them, be free to acknowledge it before you point out their deficiencies. Reproof sped by love, and

winged by commendation, will reach its mark. This is the course the glorified Saviour took with the backslidden pastors of the churches of Asia. He praised them for what was good, and censured them for what was bad. In every case He showed them the way of deliverance. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."—Isa. xlii, 3. Though one may, through repeated falls and failures, be upon the very point of giving up trying to be a Christian, do not tell him that, as he has not grace enough to save him, he might as well give up: though the flame of devotion has so completely died out that there is but a little smoke left, yet do not trample it out in indignation, but help blow it to a flame.

In an army, a cowardly or incompetent soldier, borne along by his comrades, may come in exulting at the victory, but in a hand to hand conflict, each stands upon his own merits; so in a revival those may shout on the victory who contribute little toward gaining it; but in personal effort for souls, he alone succeeds who is impelled by true grace in his heart, and guided in his course by the wisdom that comes from above.

CHAPTER XV.

CO-OPERATION.

"And they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink."—Luke v. 7.

To catch large fish, or small fish in large quantities, several men must work together. The best fisherman does not attempt, single handed, to capture whales. Whale-ships are well manned and under strict discipline. To draw in the net which Simon let down at the command of Christ, took the united crews of two vessels.

However small may be the force of any living thing, unite enough of them and they accomplish wonders. The weevil is an insect hardly visible to the naked eye; yet for years they laid waste the finest wheat fields of a large section of country. The Coral Islands of the Pacific Ocean are built from the rocky bed of the sea by polypes—small animals of the lowest order. Yet some of these islands are fifty miles long by twenty wide. These aquatic animals have built up a barrier reef along the shores of New Caledonia for a length of four hundred miles; and another which runs along the north-east coast of Australia. These mounds were built amid the waves and storms of the ocean; yet in comparison with them the greatest monuments of the physical strength of man—the walls of Babylon, the great wall of China, and the

pyramids of Egypt, sink into insignificance. They show us what can be effected by patiently toiling together towards the accomplishment of a common object.

If such mighty achievements can be effected by animals without intelligence, what might not Christians be reasonably expected to accomplish if they labored together to build up the kingdom of God among men, the untiring energy of the Holy Spirit working with them? It was doubtless with a view to these possibilities that our Saviour prayed so earnestly for His disciples that they might be united. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are."—John xvii, 11. Again, he prays that this union may be extended. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."—John xvii, 20, 21. It is impossible to conceive of a union more intimate than that which is prayed for in these words. Christ and the Father always worked together in the utmost harmony. They were in nature and essence one. Believers who are thus united, will never work against each other.

The wonderful revival on the day of Pentecost was the result of a united effort. "They were all with one accord in one place."—Acts ii, 1. Not one was absent who should have been there. They

were all of one heart. No division of feeling hindered their prayers. There was plenty of ground for dissension. Just before the crucifixion of Christ, Peter had denied Him. Common swearing is a grievous sin. For one to be guilty of it, who has been converted, shows a terrible state of departure from God. Christians would be naturally slow to receive such a person back to their confidence. But Peter had not only cursed and sworn, but had sworn that he did not know Christ. Yet his repentance was cordially accepted; and it does not appear that, in the protracted struggle of prayer for the out-pouring of the Spirit, any one suggested as a reason why the blessing did not come, that the confession of Peter was not sufficiently public and humble. Thomas had been very free to express his belief that Christ had not risen. We all know how unbelief keeps back the blessing of God. But no one reproved Thomas for his unbelief. They did not find fault with each other. Their united faith and prayers were crowned with the conversion of about three thousand souls.

Paul compares the church to the human body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ."—1 Cor. xii, 12. As the members of the body all perform their respective functions for the good of the whole; so should Christians, who form the body of Christ, work together in harmony for the advancement of His cause. "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor

again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you." 1 Cor. xii, 21. The aim of this beautiful chapter is to impress Christians, whatever may be their various gifts, or whatever position in the church they may occupy, with the importance of their being united in spirit, and of their laboring together with the one aim and to the one purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ in the earth.

There is no bond of union like the subduing influences of the Spirit of God. Hearts, like ice, when melted, run together where there is a chance. But such is the necessity of union, that even those who have the Spirit must not rely alone upon its natural tendency to unite all who have it, but must make a positive effort to maintain fellowship with the children of God. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."—Eph. iv, 3, 4.

If you would be, then, a fisher of men, you must learn to work in harmony with others. A minister of the Gospel, to be successful, needs, in a degree at least, the organizing, directing ability of a General. He must lay out the plan of his campaign, and drill, discipline, and direct his forces. As the quality of an army depends very much upon its General; so does that of a church upon its minister.

✕To have the co-operation of others you must know how to give up to the opinions of others, as well as how to command. Few, indeed, are the men who always have their own way; and

they are never found in the church of Jesus Christ. The lesson of submission is one which every one of his followers, without exception, must learn. A bishop, the highest officer in his church, must be "not self-willed."—Tit. i, 7. This qualification is imperative—for if he be self-willed, he will divide and scatter, when he should build up the church of God. Preachers of great ability, of unquestioned piety and rare industry, but who insist upon having their own way, generally can show but very little fruit of their labors. To govern others, you must govern yourself. Do not take it for granted that those who do not agree with you in everything, are opposed to you, and to the work of God. Good men may differ in judgment. Paul and Barnabas were among the best of men, but they did not always see alike. "Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God."—Acts xv, 36–40. It does not appear that either of them was at all wicked in the matter. They both had grace

enough to disagree, and still keep about their Master's work, and not go back to the world, or to the old Jewish church. But some, who call themselves Christians, appear incapable of disagreeing with their fellow servants without forsaking Christ. If they cannot have their own way, they will not do anything for the cause of God. Such have to learn the very first lesson of discipleship.

XTo have the co-operation of others, you must guard against a jealous spirit. Praise and censure are not always bestowed with discrimination. Some men are over-estimated—others are under-estimated. You may be one of the latter. But do not be disheartened by it. The time is coming when every man shall be rewarded "according as his work shall be."—Rev. xxii, 12. You can well afford to wait. Work to the best of your ability, and to the best advantage, and let others receive the credit, if need be. Pay no attention to that. All will come out right at last. As long as the preaching of another is attended with better results than your own, do not be afraid that he will supersede you in the affections of the people; but put him forward all you can. You will find something to do. If your heart is in the work, you will see various ways to help it on.

At a camp-meeting where there was an abundance of excellent help, we told an able, experienced minister whom we had not invited to preach, that he was doing more by his singing than he possibly could by preaching. Not but that his preaching would have been interesting and in-

structive—but his singing met a want at that particular time, which his preaching could not have met. The success of a meeting often depends quite as much upon other things as upon preaching. Good preachers are more plenty than good managers. Do not despise your own gifts because they are not the same as others'. Do not be jealous of others because, in some particular gift, they may surpass you. Make yourself a partaker of its benefits, by giving the largest possible chance for its exercise, and by carefully endeavoring to secure from it the best and greatest results. You will accomplish far more by setting others to work, than you possibly can by attempting to do every thing yourself.

In almost every church there are those who have a special gift of exhortation or prayer. Call it out. As far as possible, use the gifts, as well as the grace of all you can, to build up the kingdom of Christ. If God has given you a wife whose word is blessed to the edification of the people, encourage her to do all the good in her power. Wherever it has gone, the Gospel has been the special friend of woman, and has greatly improved her condition. Why should she not, then, be permitted to use her influence to the utmost to diffuse its blessings? They misunderstand the Scriptures who think they teach that woman may not employ all the methods proper for man, to persuade others to come to Christ.*

To secure the co-operation of others, you must

* See "Right of Women to Preach," by the author.

ask, and be willing to receive the advice of others. Because you are a preacher, and are "led by the Spirit," it does not follow that you know everything. Where others, as well as yourself, are concerned in action to be taken, they have a right to be consulted. The wisdom of all is greater than the wisdom of one.

"The wise, new wisdom from the wise acquire,
And one brave hero fans another's fire."

You will doubtless receive suggestions of practical value. And those whom you have taken to your counsels will make it a common cause, and will rally to your support with a heartiness which they could not feel if your conduct seems to say, "I am responsible to God alone. It is none of your business where, or how I lead, you must follow." Whatever good qualities you may have, if you have this spirit, you will lack support. You may say, "The people will not stand by the truth;" but it is largely owing to your bad management that they will not. Where one acts as if he thinks he can carry on everything alone, others are inclined to let him try it. He repels, by his self-sufficiency, those who would be glad to render assistance. He who is truly led by the Lord has an humble, teachable spirit, that makes him willing to learn of others.

Moses talked with God, as no other man ever did. The laws which he established, he received from the mouth of God. When his father-in-law saw that a change, could, with advantage, be made

in his mode of administering justice, he, unsolicited, gave Moses his advice. It was about a matter concerning which God was giving Moses full instructions. But Moses did not, because God taught him, reject the advice. "So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said."—Ex. xviii, 24.

If you are a preacher in charge of a church, and have an official board, consult them in all matters relative to the affairs of the church. Especially should this be the case in everything involving expense. A preacher has no right to run up a debt for others to pay. A good understanding in the beginning would often save from a serious misunderstanding in the end. Such is human nature that men often stand out against what they know to be right, for no better reason than the men of Israel had for their revolt against their king, because they had not been consulted by the men of Judah. "Why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?"—2 Sam. xix, 43. You may say that to wish to be consulted in matters of common interest, is a weakness from which Christians ought to be saved; but if they are not, it is worse than a weakness to act as if they were, and get yourself into trouble, and the cause of God into disgrace. But it is not a weakness. Men who are expected to spend their money and strength, have a right to be consulted, either personally or through their representatives, as to the time and manner and object. "Where no counsel is, the people fall; but

in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”—Prov. xi, 14. “For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war.”—Prov. xxiv, 6.

Take counsel of men of age and wisdom and experience, and do not imitate Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, lest, like him you lose the greater part of your kingdom. “But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him.”—1 Kings xii, 8.

In short, if you would secure the co-operation of others in the work of God, you must get thoroughly saved from selfishness. You must have no personal ends to gain, no selfish object to secure. If you work successfully for souls, you and your fellow-laborers must be held together by the constraining love of Christ.

In laboring to promote the cause of God, is it right to ask for, or accept the assistance of the unsaved—of those who do not even profess to be Christians? This is a practical question, and can be answered correctly only in the light of the Scriptures.

Solomon solicited the help of Hiram, King of Tyre, in building the temple. I do not know of any evidence that Hiram was a worshiper of the true God. He was a friend of David and of Solomon. He rendered the required assistance; nor does it appear that he exacted any pay except the necessary food for the support of his men. The twenty cities which Solomon afterwards gave him,

appear to have been voluntarily given. So that it could not, in a proper sense, be said that Solomon bought the material and hired the mechanics of Hiram. Judaism was far more exclusive than Christianity. The Jews were required simply to keep their religion: Christians are commanded to spread Christianity. If then, it was right to ask for material and labor to assist in the building of the temple, from Hiram, king of an idolatrous nation, we conclude it is right to ask men of the world for assistance in building Christian churches.

The elders of the Jews came to Christ and entreated him to heal the servant of a Roman centurion, who was sick and ready to die. "They besought him, saying that he was worthy for whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation and he hath built us a synagogue."—Luke vii, 4-5. Christ did not reprove the Jews for receiving a place of worship from a Roman soldier; but healed the centurion's servant at once.

But the Saviour encourages every one to do good to His disciples, so that it be done from a right motive. "He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."—Mat. x, 40-42.

Nothing is here said about the character of the person who performs the act for doing which the reward is promised. He may be the greatest sinner on earth. He is to be rewarded for a specific act, without any regard to what else he may have done, or may not have done. The motive required is not of a general nature, implying a gracious disposition of heart. It is one from which a wicked man may act. It is receiving—treating kindly and hospitably entertaining, a “righteous man,” or “a prophet,” a minister of the Gospel, simply because he is a righteous man, or a minister of the Gospel. He who received him may have been imposed upon—the minister may prove unworthy—but he who received him because he bore the name and had the appearance of a minister of Jesus Christ, shall *in no wise lose his reward*. He has met the conditions. Christ has pledged his word that he shall be recompensed—and that word will be faithfully kept.

There is no intimation what the reward shall be. But it shall be most ample. Christ is not niggardly in keeping his promises. “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”—Acts v, 31. He gives like a Prince. He delivers like a Saviour. As spiritual blessings are the greatest that a mortal can have, if he who gives of his substance, for the sake of Christ, will accept them, he shall doubtless receive from Christ as a Saviour, forgiveness of sins, and adoption into the family of God. But

even if he continue wicked, he shall have from Christ temporal blessings far greater than those which he has bestowed.

The instances are many of those who took their first step towards God by doing something for his cause.

Years ago, when Dr. Pitman was holding a protracted meeting in Philadelphia, the excitement ran high, and there was a good deal of disturbance. One evening he requested, in his kindest manner, an athletic young man to assist him in maintaining order. The person appealed to for aid was a cartman by trade, and a leader of the rougls. He accepted the trust and did his duty faithfully ; was convicted and converted, and became one of the most successful and acceptable preachers in Philadelphia and New York.

Said Farmer Alford, who, from being a scoffer and a man apparently hardened against any religious influence had become a devoted Christian, and a nursing father to the church :

“ My story ought to be told, if only to show the wonderful goodness of God to an old sinner like me. You know how unlikely a subject I was for grace to work upon. My wife used to go every Sabbath to the little school-house where the Sunday meetings were held, (you see there was no church here then) and I roamed the fields in dry weather, and when it was stormy read the Farmer’s Almanac and the newspapers in doors. My two boys generally went to meeting with their mother ; for though I despised such things

myself, yet I liked my wife too well to plague her, by keeping the boys at home; and besides she had a way of using the Bible, and the preaching, and such things, to make them behave as they ought.

Well, one Saturday evening she was telling them about a new minister that was to preach the next day. His name was Clark, she said; and he had been settled some years since in the place where her brother lived, and had attended him upon his death-bed. She made his acquaintance at her brother's funeral, and thought him a very uncommon preacher. And she expected great pleasure in seeing and hearing him on the morrow. All this I heard with my usual carelessness. But when I found next morning that the school-house had been burned to the ground in the night, I did feel a little sorry over Polly's disappointment. We were talking about it at the breakfast table; and one of my boys said that Deacon Jones had been around among the neighbors, (some of whom were church members) to get a chance to hold meeting that day in a private house; but none of them seemed willing to have the trouble of it. A bright thought struck me. I would show them that a man who did not make any pretense of religion was more generous and accomodating than they were. So I said to my wife, 'they may have the meeting in my new barn to-day; it is nice and clean, and big enough to hold the whole town.' Polly looked up brightly, and said it was a capital idea, and bade Jamie run right over and tell the deacon about it. The good, old man lived in a small

shanty by himself, and had no accommodations for anything. But he was mightily pleased about the barn. While the boys went the round of the village, to give notice of the matter, the Deacon and I carried in some slabs, and fixed them up for seats.

Well, it was a nice place; and the meetings were held there all summer. Mr. Clark, my wife's old acquaintance, was persuaded to stay and preach. I had a little curiosity to hear him, and I rather wanted to see how a meeting would seem in a barn. So I used to steal around the house to a big apple tree, where I could look and listen without being observed. I heard some home truths in that way; but I shut my heart against them as much as possible.

One Sunday in August just after my barn was filled with hay and grain, so that it was difficult to make room for the meeting, I over-heard the minister pray that the Lord would protect the bountiful harvest I had gathered; and would reward me for my kindness to His people by gathering me as wheat into the heavenly garner. I was a good deal touched by the prayer; and when, that night, a furious storm came on, and two barns in the neighborhood were consumed by lightning, while mine escaped unscathed, my emotions were deepened into awe. I felt encompassed by the presence of God. He seemed very near to me. And instead of coming as an avenger, to repay me for my long course of scorn and impiety, he appeared to me as a kind, though injured friend, wait-

ing to be reconciled, and longing to bless me. I went alone into my barn, and, hiding my face, cast myself upon my knees, with the cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' And there He found me—my long neglected Saviour. There He showed me His love—love so great that it could save the chief of sinners—and gave me faith to believe and to accept Him.

When the little church which we were building during the summer was finished and dedicated, I, brought in thus at the eleventh hour, a brand plucked from the burning, was permitted to offer myself publicly to the Lord. And soon my two boys, and not a few neighbors, followed me into the kingdom."

To appeal to the worldly to help sustain the church from worldly considerations—to gratify pride or appetite, is a grievous wrong to men, and an insult to Christ. It is enacting over again the crime of Esau, "Who, for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."—Heb. xii, 16. It is teaching men to despise Christ, by accepting the momentary gratification of pride or appetite in the place of the reward which Christ has promised. It is robbing them of that, in comparison with which gold has no value. It is educating the people to work with the hand of a Christian, and the heart of a heathen. To raise money for the support of the preacher, pews are rented or sold; and having respect to persons in the house of God is reduced to a system. For the benefit of Sabbath-schools, festivals, lotteries, gambling and theatricals are

often carried on under the auspices of the Church. Instances are not wanting of those ruined at the gambling table, who took their first lesson in gambling at the church festival.

If then you ask assistance for the support or the spread of Christianity, urge no motives but Christian motives ; employ no arguments but Christian arguments. “ He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.”—Rom. xii. 8. Let him do it simply because he ought to—and not partly because by doing it he can enjoy good company, and sit down to a sumptuous repast.

✕ Get wicked men to do all the good you can out of respect for Christ and love for his disciples.

CHAPTER XVI.

STUDY.

"And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets ; and he called them."—Mat. iv, 21.

Nets are instruments with which fish are caught. It is quite necessary that they be kept in order. If they are torn, the fish escape.

Truth is the instrument with which souls are brought to God. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—Jno. viii, 32. Error enslaves ; truth sets the soul at liberty. Men are lost for their persistent rejection of the truth. "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 Thess. ii, 12.

The truth by which men are saved is found in the Bible. "All thy commandments are truth."—Ps. cxix, 151. They were delivered from age to age, and gathered into one sacred volume which has come down to us. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Tim. iii, 16, 17.

God does not make a special revelation of His will to each individual. The inspiration which He promises, is one that will enable us to under-

stand the written word, and not one that will supplant it. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."—Jno. xvi, 13.

He then who would do the will of God, and teach that will to others must study the Bible, that he may understand what that will is, and how it should be properly applied to all the various relations in life. "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."—Jno. v, 39. If you would win souls, whatever else you may know, or may not know, you must know "the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—2 Tim. iii, 15. For this knowledge there can be no substitute. No familiarity with works of history, or philosophy, or science, or even of theology, can take the place of a thorough acquaintance with the word of God. One may be a graduate of a college and of a Theological Seminary, and yet not know how to wield "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."—Eph. vi, 17. If so, he will be overmatched in the conflict with error, by men of much less general knowledge, but who are familiar with the Bible. Few can appreciate the force of metaphysical arguments, but God's word carries authority. A mechanic fails to do his work properly unless he knows what tools to use, how to use them, and

where to find them when needed. So, to build up others in faith and holiness, you must know what portion of God's word is adapted to their case. To do this you must become familiar with every book of the Bible. For almost every chapter contains some new illustration or application of the truth. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—2 Tim. ii, 15. To divide the word of truth rightly, you must be well acquainted with it as a whole, and in all its parts. Suppose you had given directions to one who was working for you; would you be pleased if he neglected to acquaint himself with these directions, for the study of anything else, however important? So he who would be "approved unto God" must study the word of God.

It required far less time for God's ancient people to learn his law than it does for us. For only a small portion of the Holy Scriptures had then been written. But they were required to use the utmost diligence, early and late, in studying the law of God. It was to be their daily duty. They were to employ every device to keep it before their minds. "And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between

thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."—Deut. vi, 6–9 Josephus says the Jewish children were to learn the laws the first thing. "Let the children also learn the laws, as the first thing they are taught, which will be the best thing they can be taught, and will be the cause of their future felicity."

Though our translation is excellent, yet we would advise any one who can, to study the holy Scriptures in the original. He will in this way drink more fully into the meaning. For a person of ordinary education to learn to do this, is not so great a task as is commonly imagined. Though the Hebrew letters and words are all different from ours, yet the construction of the language is simple, and easily learned. When we were at school, the Methodist preacher of the place came into the Hebrew class. Though a good preacher, he was a dull learner of languages. We helped him regularly to get out his lesson. He studied Hebrew but one term. Yet soon after, he published in a church periodical a series of articles abounding in Hebrew criticisms, and so great was the credit he gained that he was made a Doctor of Divinity.

The Greek language is more difficult to learn than the Hebrew. And though it will require time for any person to learn the meaning of the different words found in the original Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, yet any ordinary person can gain such a knowledge of the Hebrew, or the Greek, by diligent study for three months,

as to be able by the help of the Grammar and Lexicon, to study out to his satisfaction, the meaning of any text in either of these original languages. Any one who tries it faithfully will consider his time well employed.

The best method of studying the Scriptures is a question upon which opinions may differ. We recommend to read the Bible through carefully by course. This may be easily done once a year. Portions of it,—such as our Lord's Sermon on the Mount—some chapters of John's Gospel, of Isaiah's prophecies, and some of the Psalms should be carefully committed and kept in memory. They will furnish food for reflection, and material for profitable thought and conversation. Take the important doctrines of Christianity and, by the aid of a Bible Index and Concordance, see what the Bible says respecting them. Learn, so as to be able to repeat accurately, the more important proof texts, and the places where they may be found. In this way, you will become a theologian almost without knowing how. You will be supplied from Heaven's own armory, with weapons for attack and defense. Satan is well versed in Scriptures. Each of his assaults upon our Saviour was backed by a text from the Bible rightly quoted but wrongly applied. This is a favorite mode of warfare in which he and his ministers are skilled. You must be able to meet him, as our Saviour did, with "It is also written," introducing an appropriate quotation from the word of God.

X To gain a right understanding of any text, you

must compare it with other passages which treat upon the same subject. If a general statement in one passage is qualified by another passage treating of the same subject, the general statement must be taken with the qualification. Thus the command, "Thou shalt not kill," (Ex. xx, 13), is qualified by the declaration, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."—Gen. ix, 6. You must explain figurative expressions by those upon the same subject which are evidently to be taken in a literal sense. You must not carry out a figure too far and make it teach more than was intended. Every doctrine should stand upon plain declarations of the Bible. All fanciful interpretations of the Scriptures should be avoided.

But though Divine knowledge is greatly to be preferred, where no other may be had save at its expense, yet human learning is by no means to be lightly esteemed. It aids greatly in understanding the Scriptures, to have a knowledge of natural science. The beauty and force of many allusions and illustrations of Scripture cannot be seen by one who is ignorant of natural philosophy. The candid student of nature and of the Bible can hardly fail to see that the same God is the Author of both. As Bishop Butler says, "The whole of religion is throughout credible; nor is there, I think, any thing relating to the revealed dispensation of things, more different from the experienced constitution and course of nature, than some parts of the constitution of nature are from other parts of

it." * Those men of science who reject the Bible are not at the pains to carefully and candidly study it, or they would see that it is in harmony with science. Hugh Miller says of geology, a science in which he was well versed, "It is truly wonderful how thoroughly, in its general scope, the revealed pieces on to the geological record." † "By piecing the two records together—that revealed in Scripture and that revealed in the rocks—records which, however widely geologists may mistake the one, or commentators misunderstand the other, have emanated from the same great Author; we learn that in slow and solemn majesty has period succeeded period, each in succession ushering in a higher and yet higher scene of existence—that fish, reptiles, mammiferous quadrupeds, have reigned in turn,—that responsible man, "made in the image of God," and with dominion over all creatures, ultimately entered into a world ripened for his reception; but farther that this passing scene, in which he forms the prominent figure, is not the final one in the long series, but merely the last in the *preliminary* scenes; and that that period to which by-gone ages, incalculable in amount, with all their well-proportioned gradation of being, form the imposing vestibule shall have perfection for its occupant, and eternity for its duration."

History also should be studied as time and op-

* Butler's Analogy, p. 320.

† Footsteps of the Creator, p. 326.

portunity permit. The hand of God can be seen in the history of our race. A thorough acquaintance with it, and with the prophecies of the Bible, will demonstrate that these predictions must have come from the inspiration of an omniscient Being. We do not know where a more faithful and comprehensive epitome of the history of the world can be found than in the seventh chapter of the prophecies of Daniel. A devout mind can find in the history of any nation, reasons for loving and serving God.

Literature, mathematics, in short every branch of human knowledge can be used to advantage in the work of winning souls to God. The Gospel has always been the friend of learning, and they who would labor with success to diffuse its blessings, must avail themselves of their opportunities to acquire useful knowledge. "Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom."—Prov. xviii, 1.

But as all rivers run into the sea, from which unseen they came, so should all knowledge lead the soul back to God, its Author. When John Selden, the most learned of English lawyers, came to die, he said, "I have surveyed most of the learning that is among the sons of men, and my study is filled with books and manuscripts on various subjects, yet out of all these books and papers I cannot recollect any passage whereon I can rest my soul, save one from the sacred Scriptures."

Salmasius was one of the most learned men of the age of Milton. When ten years old he trans-

lated Pindar, and composed Greek and Latin verses. Balzac pronounced him infallible; and the curators of the University of Leyden, of which he was for many years professor, declared that "their University could no more do without Salmasius than the world without the sun." Yet this great man said on his death-bed: "O I have lost a world of time! If one year more were added to my life, it should be spent in reading David's psalms and Paul's epistles."

John Wesley was a man of varied learning. Yet he says: "I want to know one thing, the way to Heaven. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from Heaven. He hath written it down in a book! Oh, give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it, here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*—a man of one book. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of man, I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read this book; for this end, to find the way to Heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of light—Lord, is it not thy word? If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God. Thou 'givest liberally and upbraidest not.' Thou hast said, 'If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know.' I am willing to do; let me know thy will. I then search after, and consider parallel passages of Scripture, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." I meditate thereon with all the attention

and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then, the witness whereby, being dead they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach."

If you study much you will have to set yourself about it with determination. There is so much to interest, so much to occupy the mind, that unless you set apart certain hours in the day for your books, and under ordinary circumstances insist upon having them free from interruption, you will accomplish but little in the way of study. Whatever your natural talents may be, if you neglect to study, you will become intellectually indolent, and incapable of any great mental exertion. Though it may at first be hard work to study, yet the mind, like the body, grows strong by exercise, and what was in the beginning difficult, by practice becomes easy. For a preacher to be a student requires industry and perseverance. If he is wholly consecrated to God, while he is daily laboring for the salvation of souls, he may each day add to his stock of learning, so as to become in time an accurate scholar, and a useful man of God.

On the 27th of September A. D. 1732, a young Irish boy of eighteen, went out as an itinerant preacher among the Methodists of England. He was small of his age—had the rudiments of learning, was thoroughly converted, and panted to know God as revealed in the Bible, and in his works. He was wholly consecrated to do God's will, and sought nothing but the favor of God and

the salvation of souls. Prayer was his continual exercise, and the Bible his one book. He frequently read it upon his knees, and often wet it with his tears. His circuit embraced parts of three counties, and had thirty-one preaching places. He preached every day, read *on horseback* four volumes of church history, and commenced the study of Hebrew. He afterwards was sent to circuits that had forty appointments. In eleven months he preached four hundred and fifty sermons. While traveling these large circuits, Adam Clarke laid the foundation of such extensive knowledge as placed him in the ranks of the most learned men of England. Nor did he ever for the sake of study abate his zeal for the salvation of souls. In sixteen years he preached six thousand six hundred and fifteen sermons. During the three years he was stationed in London he walked over seven thousand miles to preach the Gospel in the city and its suburbs. Yet he became so famous for his learning, that the highest Literary Societies considered themselves honored by his becoming a member,—Universities conferred upon him their most honorable degrees, and princes paid him homage. In the midst of all these honors, his zeal for the salvation of souls, and his simplicity and fervor in preaching, never declined. The aim of all his studies was that he might be a more effective preacher. He says, “The only preaching worth anything in God’s account, and which the fire will not burn up, is that which labors to convict and convince the sinner of his sins, to bring

him into contrition for it, to convert him from it, to lead him to the blood of the covenant, that his conscience may be purged from its guilt—to the spirit of judgment and burning, that he may be purified from its infection, and then to build him up in this most holy faith, by causing him to pray in the Holy Ghost, and keep himself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life. This is the system pursued by the Apostles, and it is that alone which God will bless to the conversion of sinners. I speak from the experience of nearly fifty years in the public ministry of the Word. This is the most likely mode to produce the active *soul* of divinity, while the *body* is little else than the preacher's creed. Labor to bring sinners to God; should you by it bring yourself to the grave. Avoid paraphrasing a whole book or epistle in a set of discourses, it is tedious and often produces many sleepers."

Every preacher may not become an Adam Clarke, but there is seldom one whom God calls to devote his whole time to the work of the ministry who may not, with proper diligence, acquire sufficient learning to preach in any place with acceptability.

Thomas Walsh was born and brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, near the city of Limerick, Ireland. His parents were bigoted papists. Becoming awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of his sinfulness, he sought rest to his soul, by confessing to the priest, going to mass, and by the vari-

ous methods in use by that church. Failing to find peace, he was persuaded by his brother, who had been designed for a priest, but who had renounced Popery on account of its many errors, to study the Scriptures. He did so—and then went to hear the Methodists preach. He was thoroughly awakened—soundly converted—clearly sanctified—and soon after, in his twentieth year, began to preach. He was an unpolished youth—had the rudiments of an education—and was filled with a burning love for God and for souls. Some were converted almost immediately under his labors. The priests stirred up persecution against him, but God gave him favor with the common people. That he might reach them the more easily, he studied the New Testament in the native Irish, and preached to them in that expressive tongue. Such was his growing popularity with the people that, to stop it, a priest said to the people, “As to that Walsh, who had some time before turned heretic and went about preaching, he had been dead long ago; and that he who then preached in this manner, was the devil in his shape.” But nothing could daunt him. Between two and three years he went up and down his native Ireland preaching on the hills, in the market places, highways, commons, rooms, ships, and everywhere a congregation could be assembled. He preached regularly twice and often three times each day. In 1753 he was sent to London. He preached constantly twice a day, visited the people in their families, and attended upon the sick and

dying. In the midst of all these labors he found time to become the best Hebrew scholar of his day. His love for the Scriptures led him to desire to understand them in their original languages. After acquiring some knowledge of the Greek Testament, he took a few lessons in Hebrew, from a Jew in London. He became deeply interested in this study, in which he believed he had special, divine assistance. In his journal is found this entry, "Dec. 20, 1756. I spent the forenoon in my studies, in which God has and does greatly assist me. About this time twelve-month, I could not read a sentence of Hebrew with any certainty, or construe a verse with readiness. But now I can read my Bible through and understand it almost as well as in Latin or English. This hath God done, enabling me to read his blessed Word in the first and best of languages. O may all my studies and talents be devoted to his glory!"

As he was all the while going from place to place, and laboring and living mostly among the poor, his opportunities for study were not what we should consider the best. But it is said of him, "He pursued his work well nigh equally, at all times and in all places, unless when sickness prevented. He seemed spontaneously to tend to God. Ever after preaching, he immediately resumed his studies (having books always with him) and this often, when several persons have been talking, or otherwise employed, as their occasions required, round about him; he still pursu-

ing his work as though he were retired in a closet; proceeding on the sentiment that he had no other business in this world, than to pray, and preach, and study, and live in every place, and in every thing for God!"

In the 28th year of his age, after a short illness, he died, exclaiming, "*He is come!—He is come!—My beloved is mine, and I am his!—His forever!*"

Concerning him, John Wesley wrote, "I knew a young man about twenty years ago, who was so thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, that if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old or any Greek word in the New Testament, he would tell, after a little pause, not only how often one or the other occurred in the Bible, but also what it meant in every place. His name was Thomas Walsh. Such a master of Biblical knowledge I never saw before and never expect to see again."*

We do not recommend any one to study, and labor as hard as did this man of God—for his excessive toils probably shortened his days; but there can be no doubt but that most of us could, without impairing health, profit by his example.

Charles G. Finney says of his early training: "When I went to Adams to study law, I was almost as ignorant of religion as a heathen. I had been brought up mostly in the woods. I had very little regard to the Sabbath, and had no definite knowledge of religious truth."

* Wesleys Works vii, p. 285.

He went to a common school until he was fifteen or sixteen years of age. When about twenty he engaged in teaching; and twice for a season, attended a High School, and gained some knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. "But," he says, "I was never a classical scholar, and never possessed so much knowledge of the ancient languages as to think myself capable of independently criticising our English translation of the Bible."

His conversion was clear and joyous, and the same night that he was converted, he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the next morning was called to preach. He at once obeyed the call. He said to a client, who came into the office to remind him that he had a suit to attend for him that morning: "Deacon B——, I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead His cause, and I cannot plead yours."

Immediately—that very day, a revival broke out under his labors. For forty years he was successfully engaged in promoting revivals all over this country and in England. Yet he found time to study, and became one of the first theologians of his day. He took hold of Oberlin College in its infancy, and in the face of the most bitter and persistent opposition, succeeded, with the help of his co-adjutors, in building up an institution that has blessed the world.

John P. Durbin was among the most eminent of the Methodist preachers of this country. He filled with credit the highest positions; was editor of the *Christian Advocate*, chaplain to the U. S.

Senate, and President of Dickinson College. He was born in Bourbon Co., Ky., in 1800. The country was then new, and his advantages for an education were such as a new country affords. Converted when eighteen years old, he was, in a few months, sent to travel a circuit. His first circuit was two hundred miles around. Here he began his studies in the cabins of the pioneers, which consisted of but a single room. He found a copy of Clarke's Commentary in numbers, which he borrowed,—two numbers at a time, and put them in a tin canister, and lashed it behind his saddle. As soon as preaching and class were over, he sat down to his studies, with pen and ink to make notes. In winter evenings his light was made from pine knots and dry wood. In this way he mastered the works of Clarke, Fletcher and Wesley. Next year he had a colleague who understood English grammar, and with his assistance, he soon became proficient in it. Near the close of the year, he became acquainted with Dr. Ruter, a classical scholar, who advised him to study Latin and Greek, and gave him grammars. He transcribed these, and without neglecting his circuit duties, he, by such assistance as he could get, prepared for college. He was next year sent on a circuit but a few miles from Miami University, and here he studied from Monday till Friday. The people complained some at first; but he had such a thirst for knowledge, and served them so well and faithfully while with them, that they encouraged him in his course. Having been sent to Cincinnati, he finished his college course

there so creditably that he was at once admitted to the degree of Master of Arts.

He often said that he adopted as his maxim for the first seven years of his ministry the saying of Job, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; why should I look upon a maid?" During all these years he avoided society, and was never seen walking by the side of a lady. He invariably rose at five in summer, and six in winter, and sat down to his books till twelve. In the afternoon he rode to his appointment, or made pastoral visits, and retired at nine or ten.

Drs. Dempster, and Henry B. Bascom, and others famous in the Methodist Church in this country for their learning, acquired it mostly while performing with striking success the duties of itinerant preachers on large circuits.

The great reason why more of the young preachers, whom God has called to his work, do not make marked improvement in learning and in usefulness, is not found in their lack of talent or opportunity, or in their excessive labors, but in their lack of whole-hearted, cheerful devotion to God. They love their ease too well. They are, too much of the time, in a state of intellectual torpor, and reluctant to put forth any effort that tasks their energies. It may seem harsh to say it—but we say it in love, and in the hope of arousing some dormant soul to action.

We should, if we would retain our freshness and our usefulness, continue our studies as long as we are able. There is always a chance for improve-

ment. Said Thorwalsden, the great Danish Sculptor, "I now perceive that I am growing old, for I am satisfied with my work."

When Edmund Burke, one of England's greatest statesmen, was complimented for his genius, he replied, "All the genius I know any thing about is hard study."

Ambrose, one of the most celebrated of the Christian fathers, says, "Men should learn before they begin to teach; and whatever proficiency one may have made, there is none but will require to be taught as long as he lives."

Christ terms his followers disciples; but a disciple is a learner. Let us ever, then, seek to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XVII.

DISCIPLINE.

"Their fish stinketh, because there is no water. and dieth for thirst."—Isa. 1, 2.

Every living thing, to thrive, must be in its native element. If in a fish-pond, the water should fail, and the fish begin to die, the first thing to be done would be to let in the water. To wait until you could separate the weak and dying from the well, would be to lose the whole.

If an organization, called a church, is composed mainly of those who have backslidden from God, or of those who were never converted, or of the two classes combined, it is of but little use to attempt to enforce godly discipline among them. What is needed is a revival of religion. The waters of life must be let in upon them until all but those who are hopelessly gone are revived—the dying recovered and the dead restored to life. Then, without injury to the living, those of whom there is no hope, and who are a reproach to the cause of Christ, "the fish that stink," can be thrown out.

That we may have a correct idea of discipline, by whom and in what manner it should be exercised, it seems necessary that we should present briefly, the New Testament idea of the constitution of the church of Christ. The word translated

“church” is, in the original, *ἐκκλησία* *ekkleesia*, from *ἐκκαλέω*, to call out, to summon forth. The word occurs frequently in the New Testament, and in every place where it is found it is translated church, except in the 19th chapter of Acts, where it is three times translated “assembly.” It is often called the “church of God,”—once the “church of Christ.”

The ministers do not constitute the church. In Acts xv, 22, we read that “it pleased the apostles and elders with the whole church.” Then the apostles and elders were not the whole church. In Rev. i, 20, Jesus says, “The seven stars are the angels “or ministers” of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.” The preachers then, whether called apostles, bishops or elders, are not the church. They should be a part of it; but they are not the church itself. Their voice is not the voice of the church. It may coincide with it and it may not. If there were ever ministers who might, with any show of propriety, assume to act for the church, it was the apostles; and if there ever was a period when such an assumption of authority would be appropriate, it would be when Christianity was being planted, and old prejudices were strong, and there were no prior examples for instruction. But when a question of practical godliness came up in the primitive church—whether the Gentile converts should be required to be circumcised or not, THE WHOLE CHURCH was consulted and their decision was regarded as a settlement of the matter. “Judas and

Silas, chief men among the brethren," were chosen to accompany the apostles and announce the decision; which they did, "and then exhorted the brethren with many words and confirmed them." Does this countenance the ministerial pretensions so common in our day? Could it be proved that the church is infallible, it does not follow that the Pope is infallible, for neither pope, nor cardinals, nor bishops, nor conferences of preachers are the church, and their decree, is not therefore the decree of the church. They are simply the servants of the church, useful while they keep their place, but usurpers when, in their pride and arrogance, they lord it over God's heritage.

The true church is composed of those who, through faith in Christ, are saved from sinning. Its members belong to Christ. They are His people. But His people are "saved from their sins." Mat. i, 21. If Jesus does not save an assembly or people from their sins, then it is not His church. It is a pretender. It does not belong to Him. The true church is holy; not in name merely, but in reality. "She looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Such is the general description of the church, given in the word of God.

So in addressing particular churches, the apostles speak of them in the same way, as being composed of those who are saved from sin. The epistle to the Romans, Paul inscribes, "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints."—Rom. i, 7. The words "to be" in our translation, have

no business there whatever. Neither they nor their equivalent are found in the original. Every one to whom the Gospel is preached is called to be a saint. But the believers at Rome were called saints because they were truly such, and "their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." The first epistle to the Corinthians is addressed, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints." The words *to be* are again unwarrantably supplied by the translators. We have here (1.) The Church of God. (2.) Paul's description of those of whom it is composed. These are not those who hear the truth preached and who receive the ordinances—but those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus—not who expect to be when they die. These lead such holy lives; are so unlike the world that they are called saints. In the second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul and Timothy address "the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." The epistle to the Ephesians commences, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." To the Philippians the opening salutation is, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." So the next epistle is addressed: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse." Peter inscribes his first epistle to the "Strangers scattered abroad,

elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." And his second epistle is addressed "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." Why were the churches, as such, commonly addressed as saints, or those who are sanctified, if they did not generally sustain this character? Individual exceptions there doubtless were, but the general character of the church was such that they were spoken of, as a body, as possessing a high degree of sanctity.

The word translated "saint" is *ἅγιος*—*hagios*, the same in the original as that translated holy. But this is the word by which the members of the church are commonly designated in the New Testament. They are not often called Christians—only three times in the whole course of Scripture; but some sixty-eight times in the New Testament they are called saints or the holy ones. There must be a reason for this phraseology. Is it not this? The word "Christian," and much more such words as Catholic and Protestant, Methodist and Baptist, may be easily used in a speculative, or a partisan sense. They are applied to those who give an intellectual assent to certain truths, or who stand identified with religious parties. But the word, "saint" or "holy" relates primarily to the individual character. It does not so much describe the creed as the state of the heart. It implies personal purity—a life that is hid with

Christ in God. It has to do, not merely with the head, but much more with the affections and the will and the every day life. Of him who bears that name, it is expected in Heaven and in earth that he will be upright in all his intercourse with his fellow-men, and walk before God in all humility and obedience.

Discipline then, should be exercised by each church as a whole, and not by the ministers alone. The apostles did not assume any such authority.

When the Gentiles first began to be converted in large numbers, some of the Pharisees who had become Christians, insisted that these Gentile converts should be circumcised, and commanded to keep the law of Moses. (Acts xv, 3.) The question was referred to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. (Acts xv, 2.) They brought it before the church; and after it was fully discussed, the decision was given by them as a whole. "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch." "And they wrote letters by them after this manner: the apostles and elders and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the gentiles."—Acts xv, 22-23. You will notice that the apostles did not claim the prerogative of settling the question by themselves. They were associated with THE CHURCH both in deliberating and deciding.

Paul, writing to the church at Corinth on a matter of discipline, says, "Do not ye judge them that are within?"—1 Cor. v, 12.

The exercise of discipline is an unpleasant task,

and too often it is left alone to the preacher. The responsibility of the church cannot be thrown off in this way. The preacher is too apt to be blinded to his duty, as long as the offender attends upon his ministry and pays for its support. So, many who are not Christians are deluded into the belief that they are, because they receive no hint to the contrary; and remain from year to year members in good standing in the church. Christianity is corrupted in the eyes of the world—superficial thinkers concluding there is nothing in it; and the unthinking accepting the current religion as genuine.

Great vigilance should be exercised in the admission of members to the church. There is no warrant in the New Testament for admitting a man or woman to the Christian church who does not profess to be converted.

But whatever care may be used in the reception of members, some will, under even the most favorable circumstances, fall from grace. Of the twelve apostles, one became an apostate. To the churches of Galatia, Paul wrote, probably within a year after they were planted, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel."—Gal. i, 6. It is evident from the epistles of the apostles, that in most of the early churches, were some who had lost or who had never possessed the Christian character.

In all cases where there is a manifest failure to live as a Christian should, the first step to be taken

is kind and earnest admonition, and importunate prayer. These should be vigorously employed as long as there is any hope. The object of church discipline is, not to gratify resentment, or simply to vindicate the church, but to save the soul and give timely warning to others. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."—1 Tim. v, 20. He does not say, "Cut them off." When a member of the church at Corinth was guilty of a crime, "not so much as named among the Gentiles," Paul commanded them to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person."—1 Cor. v, 13. But was he indignant at the one who had brought this reproach on the church? He says, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears."—2 Cor. ii, 4. And when he learned that this man had truly repented, he charged them to cordially forgive him. "Ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him,"—2 Cor. ii, 7-8. This shows that the great anxiety of the apostle was, to see this flagrant sinner saved. The skill of a physician is manifested in his curing patients considered by physicians generally, incurable. So the power of a church is seen, not in the number of respectable, moral persons whom it may gather into its fold; but in the openly wicked whom it saves, and transforms into saints, and presents "as a chaste virgin to Christ."—2 Cor. xi, 2.

X With no class is greater tenderness needed than with the erring. For sin hardens and discourages. "Brethren, if a man be over-taken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness ; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—Gal. vi, 1. If he is a rich man, do not pass his fault by unnoticed, even though the church may greatly need his help. Show that you care more for the salvation of his soul, than you do for his money. If he is a poor man do not harshly turn him out, as if you were eager to get rid of him. In either case, with all gentleness and love, make a determined effort to bring him back to God. The language of the Apostle implies that there is no doubt of his recovery, if proper means are used. His words are absolute and imperative. He speaks as though failure is entirely out of the question. He does not say, "Do all you can to restore him." But in unqualified terms he commands, "Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." If this direction was faithfully carried out, there would be fewer cases of backsliding among those who have been truly converted to God. The feet of the wanderer, would, before he had widely strayed, be turned back to the path of rectitude.

In cases where personal injuries have been received our Saviour's directions are explicit. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then

take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”—Mat. xviii, 15–17. It is evident from these words, that what is to be aimed at is—not to punish the offender, but to reclaim him. He who is eager to get others out of the church of Christ, has no right in it himself. If he had a truly Christian spirit, his anxiety would be to see the one who had grievously wronged him brought to repentance and restored to the favor of God. So Stephen prayed for those who put him to a cruel death, “Lord lay not this sin to their charge.”—Acts vii, 60. It is the manifestation of this spirit that proves us to be the sons of God. “But I say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”—Mat. v, 44–45.

If we are to feel thus, and act thus towards avowed sinners, much more are we towards them who stand connected with the church of Christ. Upon our having this kind disposition towards the erring, the Bible lays the greatest stress. It is not mentioned once or twice merely, but the necessity of it is often taught, both by precept and example. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness

of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."—Col. iii, 12, 13. If you have a complaint against any one, go to him with it,—be ready to accept reasonable explanations; and forbear and forgive. "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."—Eph. iv, 32. Forgiveness implies that wrong has been done.

This, then, is the first step in church discipline—to endeavor to restore the erring. Everything depends upon the spirit in which it is done. If you approach one who has gone out of the way, in a cold, official manner, as a detective, or with a proud, patronizing air, there is but little prospect that you will do him good. But if, in "the spirit of meekness," feeling that, under the same temptation, you perhaps would have done no better, you honestly strive to bring him to repentance, you will be almost certain to succeed. And what an inducement is there to pursue this course! "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him: let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—Jas. v, 19, 20. "The sinner," here spoken of was "a brother," as is implied in the words, "one of you."

But what shall be done with those who, after all pains have been taken with them, remain impeni-

tent and incorrigible? There may be such—some will get into the church, who were never converted. Some may refuse to walk in the light, until the light that was in them has become darkness, the conscience seared and the heart hardened. Shall the church treat these as if they were in a state of salvation? This would be to do them a great, perhaps an irreparable injury. It will be to deceive them—it may be—to the loss of their souls. However much they may contribute for the support of the church, she cannot afford, for the sake of getting their money, to allow them to go down, deceived, to hell. However long she may bear with them, she should constantly impress them with the fact that they are in a dangerous position. The Apostle's directions are of the most plain and positive character. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."—2 Thess. iii, 6. Every true Christian knows how almost impossible it is to have true fellowship with those who do not manifest a Christian Spirit and lead a godly life. The Apostle here tells us we are not to try to have fellowship for wrong-doers. The Spirit of God in his children, and the word of God always agree. If one is self-willed—will not keep his place—and submit to proper discipline, nor live according to the word of God, do not fellowship him as a Christian; but have compassion for him and do the utmost in your power for his salvation. "Yet count

him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."—2 Thess. iii, 15. Be kind to him and endeavor to win him back to his duty. This class of offenders should, while they remain in this state of impenitence, be suspended from the special privileges of members of the church. They should not be allowed to participate in the holy communion, nor should they be permitted to testify in public—unless it is to confess that they have gone astray. This suspension should continue until the offender becomes either truly penitent, or hardened beyond all hope.

From those who, after proper forbearance and labor, will not amend, and from those who live in any scandalous sin, it is the duty of every church of Jesus Christ to separate. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such an one no not to eat."—1 Cor. v, 11. There must be no act on our part that can be rightly construed into an acknowledgement that he is a Christian.

But we must not hastily conclude, on insufficient evidence that "any that is called a brother" is such a character. Satan is "the accuser of our brethren."—Rev. xii, 10. His children follow the same calling. A part, and often a chief part of the persecution to which the children of God are subject, is made up of false accusations. Job suffered in this way; first from Satan himself, and then from his own friends. Our Saviour was called—and

that by the professed children of God, "a man gluttonous, and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."—Mat. xi, 19. The martyrs generally were not put to death for being saints; but for being law-breakers, obstinate and perverse. They were often accused of crimes against humanity. So we must not be too ready to believe all that is said against a brother. If we are candid and kindly-affectioned, free from predjudice and party spirit, we shall, in all matters where it is our duty to decide, have the right to claim the wisdom necessary to come to a right decision. Yet we must acknowledge that church trials are generally unsatisfactory. Often they settle nothing; and as a rule they do more hurt than good. They are frequently the means of doing great injustice. The decisions made are often manifestly wrong. The reason doubtless is, because generally, church trials are unnecessary. The methods which the Bible prescribes to restore the erring have not been honestly tried. Or the action is too hasty. The disciples did not prefer charges against one of their number because the master said "one of you is a devil." They gave him time, and he hung himself.

There were great defections among the primitive Christians. There were notable cases of those who fell into grievous sin in the Patriarchal and the Jewish Church. The Prophets and the Apostles were plain and unsparing in their rebukes; but I do not remember of a single account in the Bible, of what may be properly termed a church

trial. I would not have the standard of Christian experience or practice lowered the least in any church. On the other hand I would do all I can to bring it up to the requirements of the New Testament; but I have never seen the standard of piety elevated in any church or in any community by an ecclesiastical trial. Generally, a spirit of division comes in—factions are formed, and it is rendered well-nigh impossible, for years, to have a revival. Such could not be the result if church trials are generally in the order of the Lord, and liable to be conducted in a proper manner. Too often they are instigated by envy, or ill-will, or disappointed ambition. In trying to turn one out, who is supposed to be unruly, a dozen or more may lose Christian love out of their hearts, and become harsh, censorious and back-slidden. The same amount of effort put forth in brotherly love for the restoration of the accused, would, in all probability, have resulted in his recovery, and in a general quickening among the brethren. Preachers who have revivals are not very apt to encourage church trials. Those who make an effort to promote a revival, but fail through their own mismanagement, or their lack of a spirit of prayer, or faith or zeal, are tempted to lay the blame on others, and to think that nothing can be done till these are removed, who, as they suppose, are hindrances to the work. But getting them out of the church does not get them out of the way. The feeling that they are treated unjustly is very apt to embitter them and their

friends against Christianity. Every effort for his salvation should be exhausted before an attempt is made to get one out of the church. A trial should never be resorted to unless the necessity for it is clear to every candid mind. Too often is it the funeral of a soul ; and it should never occur until it is certain that the subject is dead beyond recovery. They have an expressive way of saying things in Kansas. A lay-delegate in representing a preacher said, " He has not much salvation to offer, so he goes it heavy on discipline." Every church should be made up of working, loving, humble, holy members—but it cannot be made such by trials and expulsions.

An army frequently in battle is easily kept in discipline—so a church is kept pure by being steadily employed in its appropriate work of blessing and saving men.

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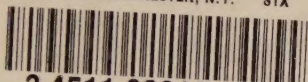
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